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HA. McCoy



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THE CITY WITHOUT A NAME.

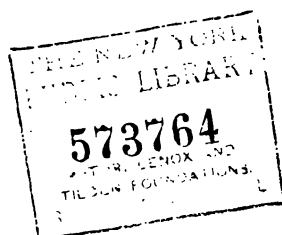
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THE CITY WITHOUT A NAME.

CHAPTER I.

ONE June night in a luxurious home on Michigan Avenue in Chicago, in the year 1897, there occurred an event that may, perhaps, influence the destinies of a race and a nation.

That afternoon a young gentleman wearing the uniform of an officer of cadets had been driven to the door in a carriage. He was received by an old woman, evidently a servant, whose dark skin denied kinship with the Caucasian race, and whose straight black hair, thin lips, and well-formed nose repudiated an African origin.

Yet her subservient greeting was more than African in its humility, though warm affection glowed in her black eyes and trembled in her voice. The young gentleman was handsome enough to rouse the admiration of any one. He was tall, straight, lithe, active, with dark hair and eyes, and an olive complexion suggestive of Italian blood. But the alert, observant, resolute

eyes did not look like the dreamy orbs of Italy. After the lamps were lighted and the muffled sound of wheels had begun to die away for the night, the youth, still wearing his uniform, was seated in a room which was evidently the library. The same old servant stood at a little distance behind his chair, which was drawn up to a large reading table. On the table were books, papers, magazines, and the comfortable litter generally visible in a much-used library.

The room was moderately large, and was surrounded with cases of books. There were several busts and engravings scattered about. The rugs, curtains, bric-a-brac and furniture testified to abundant means without hinting at extravagance. There was an entire absence of any of those little ornamental touches that tell of woman's presence. At one end of the apartment a tall, closed cabinet stood between two bookcases. Its door was a mirror over six feet in height. It looked like a wardrobe except that it was hardly deep enough for that. Altogether it seemed out of place. At the end of the reading table opposite the cadet sat a gentleman of middle age. He also was tall and straight. His hair, though grizzled with age, showed still the reddish color of its youth. His eyes were a deep, brilliant blue, and sparkled defiance to his years. In spite of the

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difference in complexion there was a strong resemblance between these men that showed them to be father and son.

The elder was speaking.

"You have done well, my son," he was saying. "I am entirely satisfied with your work. You have won the highest rank in your corps by excelling in every department of your studies, and your instructors are unstinted in their praises. Your days of school life are over. Next month you will be of age. The time has come for you to make your plans for the future, and the time has come for me to tell you of your past. For twenty years I have prayed that I might live to see this day and it has come at last. The questions you used to ask me about your birth and your kindred shall be answered to-night. But before I begin my task I will invoke the presence of the most regal spirit I ever knew, to preside over our councils.

"Here, Nella, take this key and open the tall cabinet. But first place that banquet lamp aside and turn on those incandescents above there. You have often wondered, my son, what was concealed behind that mirror. Now you shall see. That is right, Nella. Now open the door wide. Yes. You may well exclaim 'splendid'. That is just the word. Not beautiful, though in

her way she was most beautiful; nor lovely, nor any other of the adjectives we apply to other women would describe that splendid, calm, confident, resolute woman, with the grace of the serpent in her tall figure and the look of the lion in her eyes. See the wavy grace of her dusky hair; the light olive of her skin; the warm, passionate blood glowing in cheek and lip. See how haughtily the brave head rests upon the queenly neck. Note the cold, commanding gleam in the great hazel eyes with their yellowish lights. There is pride and power and courage and intensity and ruthlessness in every line and curve of that tall, strong, sinuous figure. Who is she, you ask? To me she was Fate. She was called Amaru.* She was a queen by birth and station; and she was your mother.

"You may well start. It is no small surprise to a citizen of this country to learn that he is a prince and heir to a throne. Where is it? That is a long story, the story I am about to tell you. Do you notice the scarlet turban, with the ruby ball hanging down over the forehead? That is to her people what crown, scepter and the keys of Peter were to the Catholic nations of olden times. That delicate white costume of

* Amaru, pronounced Am-mah-roo.

finest vicuna wool, embroidered with golden images of the sun, is the costume of the Chief Virgin of the Sun, queen of an undiscovered nation of the Inca race, dwelling in a City Without a Name, in far Peru.

"And what, you ask, is that strange-looking net of different colors she holds in her hand?

"That is the Royal Quipu,* the most sacred of all her possessions; for into its colored meshes and curious knots are woven the history of a royal race well-nigh extinct; of wealth incalculable; of glories forgotten and woes unwritten; the history of the house of Tupac Amaru, the last Inca of Peru, and of his descendants for twenty generations. In that box of bronze at the foot of the picture lies the Royal Quipu itself. Yes, you may well be proud of such a mother. I have shown you her picture that you may fully realize her influence upon me in the wonderful adventure that brought us together.

"Did I paint it? Yes. You know that painting is my one accomplishment, and though for many years I have not touched brush or palette I was once capable of doing work that would command attention anywhere. Into this picture I put all my powers and efforts. It was a work

* Pronounced Kee-poo'.

of love and grateful memory. I have never done anything else equal to it.

"How old was she? Ah! That I cannot tell. Once, when I mentioned my own age she looked at me with the slow softening of expression that was her nearest approach to a smile, and said: 'And how many years are mine, do you think?' She was not a woman to be flattered, and gazing into her tawny eyes I answered, 'perhaps forty, my queen.' 'That is ten years more than thine,' she answered softly, and mentioned the subject no more. Now I must linger no longer over my story in this idle way, but begin at the beginning and tell it to the end

"I am not much of a story-teller. I cannot concoct an artful scheme of words that shall conceal their object until the very last, and then spring it on you with a sensation. I must tell it straight through, without art or plan. Nella, do not lie there grieving before her picture. You have been faithful to your promise to her, and her spirit approves. Now go and leave me alone with her son.

CHAPTER II.

HOW IT HAPPENED.

WHEN Henry Meigs, in 1871, completed the Mollendo and Arequipa Railroad, in Peru, the word "impossible" was erased from the vocabulary of engineering. The story of his contempt for natural obstacles reads more like an imaginary tale than like sober reality. Miles of roadway were carved out for the locomotive along the faces of precipices so perpendicular and smooth that a bird could find no place to alight. Workmen were let down by ropes from hundreds of feet above while they drilled holes in the face of the rock for their first blasts. After they had made an opening they lived in it, enlarging it day by day in both directions, until at last they reached a place where man could find a natural foothold. When the work was done the great constructor found himself a millionaire. The banquet he gave upon that occasion cost two hundred thousand dollars, and he distributed presents worth still more. His generosity was

East with a mighty army strong and well equipped, and then they will rise and sweep the white man into the Pacific. Until then they wait, and patiently serve him. This is what he told me. When Tupac Amaru, the last of the Incas, was torn in pieces by Spanish horses in the public square at Cuzco, a faithful priest of the Sun fled, carrying with him a son and two daughters of the Inca. Far to the northeast they fled, among the fierce Chunchos. These Chunchos had learned to hate the Spaniard, and they succored the fugitives. Others rapidly followed. Day after day the stream of refugees continued. The Chunchos let them pass freely, and they founded a new city far inland, a City Without a Name, so that no one could tell its site or character. To this city the priests conveyed the gold and gems they had concealed from the greedy invaders. They also carried thither the embalmed bodies of their Incas, except four who had been found and desecrated by the Spaniards. The City Without a Name must now be a great city, he thought. It was a city of refuge to all who wished to escape from the white man.

No white man could reach it. The Chunchos were untamable, and the country swarmed with them. I asked him if he had ever seen any one who had visited the City Without a Name. No,

no indeed. No one ever returned from that city. When a man started on that journey he was never more heard of. I laughed and asked him how he knew they ever got there. Was it not more likely they were all slain by the Chunchos? He shook his head gravely. When I pressed him for a reason for his faith he at last yielded. With much caution, and after exacting a solemn promise not to betray him or the secret, he told me that once he had seen a man traveling eastward, who said he had been called to the City Without a Name, and dared not refuse to go. He had shown a token sent him with the order, a small silver arrow, with a black cord with one knot in it. The point of the arrow was tied up with a little scarlet cotton. "When a Quichua receives such a summons," he said, "he goes."

Had the white man never heard of this strange city, I asked. Indeed they had. Twice had parties started out with the intention of finding it. They had not gone far. The deadly Chunchos had attacked them and driven them back with great loss. The savages had not been content with their victories, but had attacked the outlying settlements and destroyed them, so that there were farms and villages lying abandoned in the wilderness and no man dared go near them. This was the adventure that tempted me

now. I longed to reach the City Without a Name.

I cautiously extended my inquiries among the few white men I knew in Arequipa. I learned that there was a firm belief in the existence of a large city, somewhere to the northeast, inhabited by Quichuas and governed by lineal descendants of the Incas. It was true, as I had heard, that at various times sundry expeditions had tried to reach this city, but they had all been driven back by the Chunchos Indians, whose fierce and intractable nature precluded the possibility of any negotiations with them, and whose rugged and almost impassable country was a stronghold that could not be forced. The white men had first learned of this tradition through the revelation made by an Indian woman. Her fondness for her Spanish master was stronger than her love for her race, and she revealed the secret. It was more than a tradition to her, for her own father was one of those who mysteriously disappeared into the wilderness, and are seen no more. She told, with a shudder of terror, how she had heard a strange sound outside their hut one night, a sound like the low cry of some wild animal. Her father heard it, too, and rose at once, and went out of doors, softly, as though wishing not to rouse any one. Then she, too,

arose, and looking round the door-post into the moonlight she saw a short, stout, hideously painted creature, whom she thought was the Satan. And he put his hand on the shoulder of her father, and whispered a word in his ear, and gave him a little silver arrow, and went away. Then her father sank to the earth like one stricken, and moaned in his hands, dry-eyed.

When she went to comfort him he told her that it was not the Evil One, as she supposed, but a messenger summoning him to the City Without a Name; and that he must go at once, without time for farewells, or he, and his house, and his family would all be suddenly destroyed.

He bade her never tell to any one what she had seen and heard; and then he kissed her, and went away. He was never seen again.

The Spaniards believed that immense wealth was stored in that mysterious city, though it was altogether surmise; for no human being had ever returned from it to describe its wonders.

It was known however, that at the time of the conquest, and for many years afterward, immense amounts of gold and silver and precious stones had been so cunningly concealed by the Indians that they were never found. It was also known to be a fact that large numbers of the Quichuas had at first sought refuge in the eastern forests,

and that for generations it was no uncommon thing for others to follow them.

Moreover the streams that penetrated that impassable country were known to bear a precious freight of gold along in their swift currents, and the Quichuas were all cunning seekers after the yellow dust.

I became more and more impressed with a belief in the reality of this city. My work with Meigs was done. I was free from every tie. I had means enough for any reasonable expenses on such an expedition; and I was in the mood that drives men to do those things which wise people call foolish when they result in failure, or daring when they succeed.

The charm of mystery hung over the adventure. If successful it would result in wealth and fame. If I failed, well, it was only a few years less of struggling with the problems of life. No one need know anything of my fate. I would not ask their aid, and I did not desire their sympathy. The meditations of a single night decided me. I would go. My plans were formed with equal rapidity. I remembered reading of a traveler who crossed the Empire of China, through hostile territories, without danger and in perfect comfort, through a simple expedient.

He wore the yellow costume sacred to the

royal family, and everywhere exacted the homage due to his pretended rank. I too would don the costume of royalty, an Inca's garments, would speak no tongue but the Quichua, and would maintain the dignity of my supposed rank. I would contrive to send a message to the City Without a Name requesting a summons and a safeguard.

What I would do after I reached that mysterious goal should depend upon the circumstances, as they arose. I began my preparations the next morning and pushed them vigorously until they were completed. I caused to be made a costume consisting of a tunic and leggings of finest vicuna, gorgeously colored in yellow, white and red. It was profusely ornamented with gold lace and embroidery. Upon the breast was emblazoned a golden sun and a silver star. I also had a rich turban made of yellow silk embroidered with scarlet and gold. Its folds all concentrated in front and were confined by a large brooch representing a coiled serpent. From this there depended, between the eyes a small scarlet ball. A sash of gorgeous colors, trimmed with gold fringe, completed this vivid costume. Of course I could not travel through the country thus arrayed. Not only would it attract too much attention, but it would be torn in pieces

on the first rough march. I therefore had a suit of dressed buckskin made to fit loosely over the other. It was like a Kentucky hunting shirt, with loose trousers. On my feet I wore stout boots, as a protection against insects and reptiles. The turban, folded into a small compass, was to be carried in the breast of the hunting shirt, which was provided with several inside and outside pockets.

In those pockets I carried my razor, comb, pocket compass, watch, a small spyglass, a case of needles, thread, and pins, a small box of crayons and pastels, a little mirror, and some other trifles. In a waist-belt worn next the skin I had a liberal supply of small gold coin. For weapons I wore a Smith and Wesson pistol, 38 caliber, a breech-loading rifle using the same cartridge, and two hundred and fifty cartridges. I also had a keen bowie knife in a sheath in the breast of the shirt.

A small knapsack was packed with several changes of underclothing, the surplus cartridges, a thermometer, an aneroid barometer, a small case of medicines, a nautical almanac and some oil colors. At last all my preparations were completed. Courtesy demanded that I should bid farewell to my chief, and I did so. We parted courteously, but coldly. He politely

inquired if I intended returning to the states. I told him that I was thinking of a short pedestrian tour toward Cuzco before going home. He gave me letters of introduction to officials there, letters I did not use, and I never saw him again. With some of my associates my relations were more cordial.

One of them would have accompanied me on my journey to Cuzco if I had offered him any encouragement to do so, but I did not.

I left Arequipa early one morning, before the town was awake, and from that moment I disappeared from civilization. When I reached Cuzco I wore my huntsman's dress, spoke no English, and sought lodgings and companionship only with the Quichuas. My face was bronzed from long exposure to southern suns, I wore no beard or mustache, I spoke no language but Quichua, and though the Indians evidently did not deem me one of their own race, neither did they think I was one of the oppressors whom they served and hated.

CHAPTER III.

THE START.

I FOUND lodgings with an old Quichuan named Miguel. His family consisted only of himself, his wife, a mongrel dog, two or three pigs, some fowls and some pigeons. He gave me a room for myself alone, an unusual circumstance with the Indians, but I insisted upon it and paid him to his satisfaction. For two weeks I saw no chance to pursue my plans. I had decided that it would be necessary to secure the confidence of the Indians, and to persuade some of them to accompany me at least a part of the way.

As the time passed, however, I gradually induced Miguel to permit a little more intimacy, and he began to show marks of growing confidence. Very carefully I began to approach the subject that was ever uppermost in my thoughts, the City Without a Name. Several times I led the conversation to a point that would almost warrant the introduction of the subject, but with visible embarrassment Miguel would sheer off to other topics.

At last I determined to risk a bold stroke. If it failed, I could only go to some other city and try again. I donned my gorgeous costume and put on the hunting suit again to conceal it. I placed the headdress convenient to hand and then invited Miguel to a quiet smoke. He readily accepted, for he appreciated my cigars. Gradually I led him to speak of his government, and asked him if the Indian had an equal chance with the white man before the law.

"Are both alike in your country?" he gravely asked.

"I have no country," I replied, "but I have visited many lands where the white man rules over other races. It is the same in all. He makes the laws, and uses them. The red man and the black man have to take their chances."

Miguel bowed gravely without speaking, but his bow and shrug answered my question.

"But your people do not always wait to feel the whip of the law, if they know it is coming, do they?" I asked. He smiled, and shook his head. Leaning forward I said in a low tone: "Where then do they go?"

He looked suspiciously into my face before he answered. Then, shrugging his shoulders he said:

"Oh, some go to the states north and some to

the states south, and some to sea." Looking straight in his eyes I rose slowly to my feet. I took from my bosom the gorgeous turban and put it on my head, with the ball, the symbol of royalty, hanging over the forehead. Then I threw off my hunting shirt and stood revealed in the guise of an Inca. Miguel gave a gasp of terror and consternation. Then he threw himself down upon the floor and with his face in the dust lay at my feet. Presently he raised his face from the floor and covered it with his hands. A low sound came from his lips, which I thought at first was a moan; but it began to be intelligible, and I could catch the words. It was a sort of chant, so soft and low that it was not audible beyond the room in which I stood.

"It has come," he was saying, "the day has come. Your people have waited long. The young men have grown old and died; the babes have become gray and left to their grandchildren the hope of your coming. In the night, in the darkness we have sung of your return. The cliffs and gorges have heard it; the forests have heard it; but you came not, and our souls were weary with waiting. But you have come. The sun of our race rises again. His glory shall be complete. It is a resistless fire. It shall wither the grass of their fields. Their consuming shall gladden

our hearts. The day of restoration, the day of vengeance has come. Speak your will, my lord, and it shall be done in an instant. Before the light of morning the swift of foot shall go to the North and the South to the East and the West, to proclaim your will. We will tear up their iron roads and cast them into the abysses. We will throw their devil's threads of wire into the sea, and they shall follow them. From the sea to the eastern forests the Inca shall rule his people again. Speak, my lord, that your servants may do your will. By this token I swear it."

He raised his hand and reverently touched the golden sun that blazed upon my breast. I had succeeded. My plans were right. I felt at that moment a thrill of triumph worth all the risk. Another thought impressed itself vividly upon my mind. It was that this would be a wonderful opportunity for a scoundrel to incite a great insurrection, secure vast plunder, and then disappear as mysteriously as he had come.

Three days of work would be all he needed. I felt that the fate of thousands was in my hands, and I was glad those hands were clean and honest. I told Miguel to rise, and he did so.

"Now that I have made myself known to you," I said, "we can talk freely. Miguel, the time has not yet come for the change you long for.

Your Inca who is to free you must come from the East with a mighty army. The power that rules the fate of nations has sent me to the City Without a Name. The same power will direct me when I shall have reached the city. I carry to our people the knowledge and the learning that will prepare them for the great return. They are many in numbers and strong of heart, but they have only the weapons of their fathers, and cannot now contend with the armies of the oppressor. But when they have learned all the wisdom of the white man; when, secure in their hidden country, they have made the weapons of to-day and learned to use them, there will come a morning when with the rising of the sun they shall burst upon the land and overturn their foes in a day.

“Therefore I say to you that peace must reign yet a space longer. When all is ready you will be notified, and your aid required. What I now want is a small company of faithful ones to go with me to the City. There are men in Cuzco who wish to go but have no token. To-morrow night have a few of those men, not more than ten, meet me here at midnight, ready to depart. I have spoken.”

Without a word Miguel bowed to the ground and retired. Then I began to feel astonished at

my own words. What strange impulse had led me to thus prophesy a future coming of a hidden power? Why had I felt such certainty concerning the City with its surrounding country and numerous population? Had I spoken more truly than I realized when I said I was sent by a power that would direct my efforts? Whatever may have been the cause it is a fact that from that moment I felt a confidence in the success of my undertaking that excluded all doubt or apprehension. It seemed to me that I was led by a feeling that almost amounted to inspiration. I slept that night the calm sleep of one whose plans are made, whose preparations are completed, and whose future is clear.

I decided to wear the Inca costume under my ordinary clothing when I arose in the morning, and that was the only question that presented itself to me for solution ere I was lost in dreams. The next day I could see a change in the manner of Miguel. In my presence he was silent, but his face was full of awe and reverence. Soon after sunrise he disappeared and I saw him no more until nearly midnight, when he presented himself at the door of my room, and craved permission to bring some friends with him.

I was expecting them and was fully arrayed to receive them. They filed in after him. There

were ten beside himself. Everyone of them was barefooted, and wore on his shoulders a small burden of some kind. One of them carried only an adobe brick. I recognized the significance of this at a glance. In the ancient days of their glory no human being, not even wife or children, came into the Inca's presence except barefooted and bearing some burden in token of servitude. One by one they prostrated themselves before me and awaited my words. I let them remain in silence for a few minutes, not for the sake of considering what I should say, for I had arranged all that in my mind, but to give time for a deep impression. Silence, during such a waiting, is more eloquent than any words can be. Finally I spoke to them: "Rise to your feet, my friends, I would see your faces." They stood before me, and I scanned their faces one by one.

"I have called you friends," I said, "for I know that Miguel is faithful, and his friends are my friends. You know whither I go. Do you, each of you, wish to go with me?" They all bowed. "It is well," I continued. "We start this night for Chaupimayo and the deserted settlements beyond. There I shall receive a summons to The City Without a Name. I will take you all with me if he who rules the city will con-

sent. If any of you have to return it shall be with such a reward as an Inca gives his friends. Does this content you?" They looked at each other before replying. Then one of them, a tall strong fellow, spoke for them:

"We would rather go on than return," he said, "but the word of our lord shall guide us."

"It is well," I answered. "Now, my children, are you ready to start? I would travel many miles before morning."

"We are ready," replied the same man who had spoken before.

"By what name are you called?" I asked him.

"I am Huanaro,"* he said.

"Huanaro," said I, "as you speak for the others so shall you speak for me. You shall carry my burden, and be at my right hand." He bowed and thanked me, and I could see that he was immensely proud of his office.

"We have brought a litter for my lord," he said, "and when he is ready we will bear him on his way." Now I had not thought of this contingency, but I instantly remembered that the Inca was considered too sacred to allow the earth to come in contact with his feet. Such a thing as his walking was unknown. Even in battle he rode in his splendid litter. But I could not

* Pronounced Won-ah'-ro.

tolerate such a ridiculous arrangement. Something must be done to settle that matter at once.

"Huanaro," I said, "the age and the times are different now from those that are passed away. When the Inca goes into battle now he will go on foot or on horseback. On this journey it is his will to go on foot. You will leave your litter with Miguel. Now you may all retire. I will put on a plain and simple costume, for I must not be known to any but yourselves. In half an hour I will join you, and we will begin our journey.

CHAPTER IV.

THE JOURNEY.

IN half an hour I stood before the door of Miguel's house ready for the journey. The ten Quichuas were waiting in a disorderly group. Then there arose to confront me the first of a long series of problems that had to be solved as they presented themselves, yet in which it would not do to make any mistake. In the present instance it was this: I did not know the country through which I must travel, nor the place to which it was proper for us to go. Yet these men looked to me as the source of all knowledge. I must direct their movements. It would not do to ask any questions that would betray my ignorance, yet I must be guided by their knowledge without their suspecting that such was the case. It was at that instant that the realization came over me that I must not ask questions; and it puzzled me to know what to do. But I have always been blessed with an abundance of self-confidence, and it came to my aid at this junc-

ture. Calling to my side Huanaro I gave directions for the march.

I said to him: "Point out to me the man who is most familiar with the country we have to cross." He pointed to a low, strongly built fellow. "Call him hither." Huanaro pronounced the name of Juan, and beckoned to him. When he had come I said, still speaking to Huanaro: "Let this man, with one other, go some twenty paces in front. He knows the country and shall lead the way. Let two more follow ten paces behind him. You will then walk with me, carrying my rifle and knapsack. The others will follow ten paces in our rear. Let each man take his share of the baggage I have had provided for the journey. It is in eight small packages. Juan will not carry one. It is my will that we travel by the small paths and byways as much as possible until we pass the thickly settled part of the country. When the sun rises we should be near some place where we can rest all day without being observed. If Juan sees that we are about to meet any one let him send back his companion to warn us, and then delay the strangers for a few minutes until we shall have time to retire from observation. No one but this band must know of my coming until all is ready and your help comes from the East in might and power. I have spoken."

Without a word Huanaro went forward and arranged the band as I had directed. In two minutes perfect order succeeded the irregularity of their first appearance. Huanaro came to my side. "All is as my lord has said," he reported. I waved my hand for a signal and he gave a soft whistle. The men thirty feet in advance of us repeated it, it was answered from the front, and we were in motion. We soon left the city behind us and entered the open country. It is one of the most interesting lands in which to travel. We were in what is called the great tableland of Cuzco, but its surface is like anything else rather than a table. We were traveling in a northeasterly direction and had not gone more than a league before we left the main road and followed a trail leading a little more toward the east. It was dim and uncertain, but Juan followed it with steady confidence born of long acquaintance. The night was almost cold, and no breeze was stirring. The moon had risen, and as our route lay up one hill and down another in continual succession I caught frequent glimpses of the surrounding country. It was mountainous in every direction, interspersed here and there with little streams that sometimes ran through deep gorges and sometimes flowed through narrow valleys that were cultivated. Here and there a little

lake would be seen gleaming in the moonlight.

My men all wore woolen clothing, as indeed the inhabitants do the year round. In that climate the terms winter and summer do not mean respectively a warm season and a cold season. They mean a wet season, the summer lasting from September to May, when it rains every day, and hails and snows occasionally; and a dry season which is winter, lasting from May to September, when it seldom rains but is always cool enough for woolen clothing. It was now May, and as I said my men wore woolen clothes. The color was dark blue, so that it was not conspicuous. They wore no arms except that each had a heavy, sharp cane knife, like the Cuban machete, by his side in a rawhide sheath.

Although it was winter we passed many little patches of corn, peas and potatoes. Also we saw some fruit trees in bloom. Yet the air was so chilly that I looked for frost.

Ere dawn of day we had traveled some five leagues. My legs had been so seasoned by two years of tramping with chain and transit that no amount of walking or climbing could fatigue me. I soon perceived that my pedestrian powers were exciting the admiration of my escort, and I determined that if they were fond of good walking they should have plenty of it.

I was anxious to avoid attracting attention to my little party, so just before sunrise we separated, to reassemble at a designated spot about nightfall. Huanaro and I sought refreshment at an Indian hut which we reached soon after the sun rose, and after a substantial breakfast of corn cakes, butter, eggs and milk I fell into a dreamless sleep. It was noon when I awoke. As I opened my eyes I saw a supply of fruits and milk on a rude bench by my side. No one was in sight, and the only noise audible was the cackling of the fowls outside. I refreshed myself with the milk and then slept again, for the long tramp of the preceding night, added to the excitement of the last two days, had made me very tired. Before nightfall I awoke fully restored, and took a good look at the surrounding country. I found we were near the western bank of the Urubamba River. At that place it runs northward between perpendicular cliffs of red clay and rock. From my position on the hill above the little field cultivated by my host I had a good view. To the westward rose the majestic peak of Vilcanota, floating white and still against the clear blue sky. Far away to the north gleamed the dim white, needle-shaped cones of the eastern Cordilleras. To the southward Misti loomed high above his fellows, his long slum-

ber being only preparatory to a furious eruption.

To the eastward was a jumble of mountains, hills and gorges. Here and there the dim post road could be seen, giving occasional glimpses of the strings of mules carrying their loads of cinchona, coca, or perhaps of silver bars from the mines to Cuzco. As night approached the sun disappeared with a plunge behind the peaks, but for a long time his light could be seen gilding their snowy summits. The rosy twilight thus reflected from their cones gave to the dusk a mysterious clearness not easily forgotten. As soon as it was dark Huanaro and I started for the rendezvous. It was at the queer rope bridge that crosses the Urubamba River at that place. It is made of ropes twisted from some sort of small trees or brushwood, probably willow. Upon these ropes are fastened wooden poles or rails for a floor. The bridge answered very well for pedestrians, but I should not like to ride a horse over it. In fact, if a wind were blowing pretty briskly I do not believe a horse could cross it, on account of its swaying. Huanaro told me that a few leagues east of us there was another stream called the Mapacho with a fine stone bridge over it, but I have never seen the name of that river on any map.

After following the public road some distance through gorges and over steep hills and along the course of little streams with narrow strips of cultivated lands, our guide turned abruptly to the northeast and led us into the forest. It was not the tangled maze of vines and shrubs and great trees generally associated in our minds with the idea of a South American forest.

We were too high up in the air for that, our elevation being eleven or twelve thousand feet. The trees are stunted, there are few vines, and a wiry sort of grass struggles for existence in places where the soil has not been washed away. We traveled half the night through this wild region, up one mountain and down another, sometimes over wastes of desolate rocks that required careful work to avoid breaking our necks. We turned to the southeast after awhile, and Huanaro told me we had crossed the post road from Paucartambo and would go over a pass much easier than the one used by the government. By morning we had gone over thirty miles, and all of us were ready for a good, long rest. We had reached the western bank of the Paucartambo River.

I decided that it was no longer necessary to travel only by night, so we remained here all that day and night. The next morning we set out

through a wild and desolate region. It is not worth while to say more of it than that at night we halted on the top of a mountain ridge known as the Caribaya range. Here everything was silent and cold. We camped as comfortably as we could, and I never enjoyed a cup of coffee more in my life than the one Huanaro made for me that night. The next morning I looked eastward over the great Amazonian wilderness that held my future. Thirty miles in that direction lay the outlying hamlet of Chaupimayo. Beyond that—what? I gazed long and earnestly. Instead of the vast expanse of forest I had expected to see I beheld a most broken and diversified country.

Ranges of low mountains trailed away to the northeast, the east, and the southeast, their tops looking blue and soft in the distance. Beyond this fact my survey taught me nothing. Our descent was steep, rapid and dangerous. Every hour brought us into a new and warmer climate characterized by new growths of trees and plants. Shrubs, vines and flowers became abundant, and frequently required the use of the machete to make a way for us to pass.

Parrots, monkeys, and a multitude of bright-winged birds chattered saucily about us as we passed. Partridges, pheasants and snipe flew

up from our very feet. Large hares stared stupidly at us. The most unwelcome inhabitants were the snakes. Such rattlers I never saw except in the swamps of Florida. The worst of all was the copperhead, for he was always anxious for a fight, and if we would not go to him he would come to us. In going from the foot of the mountains to Chaupimayo we had to shoot three of them in self-defense. We saw no pythons, though Huanaro said there were many of them about the watercourses. Then we saw a little black adder that the Quichuas seemed to fear more than any other. We slept at night with our heads covered, so that if any of the reptiles should crawl over us they would not be tempted to strike. Well, what with watching for snakes, and chopping vines and bushes, we were able to travel only about twelve miles a day in this jungle. At last we were past Chaupimayo and made a raft on which we managed to get across the river Cosnipata. It is a miserable little stream, deep and swift, full of rocks and rapids.

After we got across we rested there until the next day, and cooked rations. We did not have a very quiet night. Mosquitoes and gnats sang their lullabys in vain. Four immense alligators crawled up to see what we were about, and when

alarmed ran back to the water. They did not return, but every little while they made a great splashing and bellowing. It sounded like a bull-fight in the water. Several jaguars prowled round our camp and squalled at us and to each other. They were afraid to attack us on account of our fires, which the Indians kept roaring all night with a supply of dry wood they had gathered that day for the purpose.

Toward morning the serenade ceased and I got a little sleep. Two days more we fought our way toward the northeast, bitten by insects and annoyed by wild bees until we were well-nigh desperate. On the evening of the second we suddenly came to a little clump of deserted houses surrounded by the remains of a heavy palisade. The ground inside had been so heavily trampled that vegetation had not been able to grow there as rankly as in the wild land outside. On the eastern side of the stockade the ground sloped to a belt of timber some two hundred yards away, and from its character I rightly judged that a river ran along the edge of the clearing. This stream, I knew, must be a tributary of the Madre di Dios, as the Spaniards call it. They gave it that name from the fact that when the Chunchos destroyed a settlement up the river the image of the virgin somehow found its way into

the river and was rescued many miles below the destroyed village. The Indians called it the Amaru Mayu, meaning the Serpent River. This was evidently one of the settlements that had been devastated by the Chunchos. There were several heaps of charred material showing where other houses had once stood. No doubt a tragedy had been enacted here in days not long past. My Indians seemed to take it for granted that we were to stop here. They gathered silently about me and seemed waiting for orders. As it was against my policy to ask questions I also took it as a matter of course, and told Huanaro to see if he could find a house fit for occupation. Meanwhile I pulled myself together and shook off a feeling of depression that had seized me. What had I come for? I asked myself. To go to the City Without a Name. What reason was there for halting in this abomination of desolation?

Simply because it was not practicable to go much further until I was in communication with the Chunchos, who must act as my guides.

How was I to accomplish this? Plainly I must manage to let the Chunchos know of my presence. Huanaro came to say that one of the cabins had a good roof and that the men would soon have it cleaned out and some fresh boughs spread for a

bed. "Yes," I said, "it is better to camp here than to cross the river yonder and camp in the woods. His eyes opened wide in alarm.

"My lord," he said, "I pray you to go no further until a token comes. You know that beyond this plantation there is only wilderness. It is death to any who meet the Chunchos without the token. I pray you let us remain here until the token comes."

"Very well, Huanaro," I answered. "We can wait here as well as elsewhere. But first I must meet a Chuncho and send a message to the City so that my token may come to me."

"My lord," he replied, "few days pass that some one of them does not come into this neighborhood. When one comes he will soon see signs of our presence. Then it will not be long before you see the Chunchos."

"Your counsel is good, Huanaro," I said. "We will wait for them here, and we will help them to find us."

I was soon installed in my new quarters. It was an adobe hut thatched with straw. The floor had been swept clean and some boughs of fragrant brushwood were spread for carpet and bed. My men built a bright fire in the open ground, some twenty feet before my door. Some of them were providing a pile of fuel for the

night's fire, to keep off the wild beasts, and others were cooking our evening meal.

As the thin blue smoke curled upward around the treetops I suddenly thought that it would be a good way to attract the attention of any wandering Indian. I determined that on the morrow I would raise a column of smoke that could be seen from a long distance. After a good supper of corn bread, roasted pheasant, and coffee, I spread my blankets on the fragrant boughs and fell into a sound slumber. When I awoke it was broad daylight.

After breakfast I directed Huanaro to have a large fire made of green wood and trash that would make a big smoke, and to have it maintained all day. He understood my purpose at once, and entered into the plan with enthusiasm. When it was well under way I sent three of the men to the river bank to bring me some of the bark of some white-looking trees I could see growing there. From that distance they looked like birch, but they proved to be a species of cottonwood. The men soon brought a large bundle of the bark. Then I took a piece of it about six or eight inches square and carved upon it an image of the sun. This I gave to Huanaro and told him to set all the men at work making similar carvings on pieces of the bark.

This he did at once, but I could see that he was at a loss to understand my object. They soon had forty or fifty rude pictures of the sun cut into the pieces. Then I started for the river, bidding them come and bring the carved bark. When I reached the bank I took piece after piece and cast it into the swift current. When one would be swept a hundred yards away I would cast in another, and continued to do so until they were all launched upon their mission. I now felt that not much time could elapse before the Chunchos would become aware of our presence. No savage would see that white procession marching down the river without inquiring its meaning.

We went back to camp and disposed ourselves to await events. I did not intend to allow myself to be surprised in any hostile manner, and had out pickets night and day. We had our arms ready for instant use. When the Chunchos came they should find us expecting them, and it would be strange if I could not manage to get speech with them, no matter what might be their feelings toward my party. The Chunchos did not come as soon as I expected. I learned afterward that they knew of the presence of a party in the old stockade the day after our arrival, but the prodigious smoke of our fire puzzled them, and they spent three days surreptitiously watch-

ing our movements. They had also sent pieces of the carved bark to their chiefs for their inspection. At last they became satisfied that we were waiting for a meeting with them. Thus it happened that on the fourth day of our waiting, a little before sunset, I noticed a sudden sensation among my Quichuas.

They were standing together on the eastern side of the stockade, gazing intently toward the forest. I went out to where they stood, and looking in the same direction saw an Indian coming slowly out of the woods by the river. He would come a few steps, halt, then a few more steps, then another halt. This he continued to do until he was about a hundred yards away. Then he stopped and stood leaning on his spear. Turning to Huanaro I said, "Come with me."

We went out into the open and stopped to return the inspection of the savage. "Make a sign of peace," I said to Huanaro. He raised his hands above his head with the palms outward and held them thus an instant. After a pause the savage repeated the sign. Huanaro turned to me for instructions. "Wait here," I said. Huanaro bowed low and said: "Forgive me, my lord, but there is no faith in those savages."

"Fear not, Huanaro," I replied. "His life is in my hands." Then I went forward alone to meet him.

CHAPTER V.

THE TOKEN.

WHEN I reached a point about a hundred feet from the savage I halted to have a good look at him. The western sun shone full in his face. I saw that he was armed with a long, heavy bow and a sheath of clumsy arrows swung to his back, while in his hand he carried a stout spear about seven feet in length. His countenance was not prepossessing even at that distance. After gazing at him for a minute I laid down my rifle upon the grass and made signs for him to put down his weapons. He did so without hesitation. I had no doubt he felt master of the situation, for if I went forward to meet him I must leave my weapons behind. I took a few steps toward him and beckoned for him to advance, but he would not stir. He was not going to leave his weapons. Then I advanced again, confident that I could draw my revolver and kill him before he could stoop down, seize bow or spear, and attack me. As this narrative proceeds

you may, perhaps, think I was inclined to look too lightly upon the taking of human life. If so, you must remember that in that region the only law was the law of might, and strife meant death to one party or the other. I naturally preferred that it should be the other party, and did not feel any conscientious scruples in dealing with them according to their own code of action.

When I was within ten feet of him he raised his hand with a gesture that evidently meant "halt," and I obeyed. Then we studied each other intently. I think to this day he was the most malicious and murderous specimen of humanity I ever saw. He was perfectly naked. He did not wear even a belt. He was low of stature, not over five feet four inches, I should say.

His shoulders were narrow, but his arms looked heavy and strong. His hips and thighs were tremendous, revealing great powers of locomotion. The feet pointed toward each other instead of outward. His eyes were small, black and snaky, and the outer corners were higher than the inner, which suggested a Chinaman; but his color was a dark copper. His hair was straight and black, but only long enough to reach the shoulders. His legs, breast and arms were elaborately streaked with red and yellow paint, while on each cheek three horizontal stripes of black

assisted in heightening his truly diabolical expression. It gave me a creepy feeling to look at him and my nerves were tense with readiness to act at the first suspicious motion he might make. At last I spoke to him in Quichua.

"Do you speak Quichua?" I asked.

A startled gleam shone for an instant in the snaky eyes, but he neither spoke nor stirred. I believed that he understood me, but although I continued speaking I also endeavored to convey my meaning by means of signs. I told him I wanted to go to the City Without a Name, repeatedly pointing to myself and then over his head to the northeast. After awhile the rascal nodded his head to show that he understood. Then I said I wanted him to show me the way, pointing first to him, then to myself, then to the northeast. He seemed quite willing to understand this proposal. Then I said I must take my men with me, holding up the fingers of both hands and pointing to them, to him, to myself and toward the city. It seemed as though he would never understand that proposal, and when he did he shook his head violently. I determined to try the effect of my supposed rank. I quietly drew the royal turban from my bosom and placed it on my head. Then I opened wide my hunting shirt and displayed the golden sun

blazing on my breast. His savage stoicism was overcome in an instant, and he stared in amazement. Then I spoke in a commanding tone. I said: "You are not the man for me to talk to. Go back to your chiefs and carry my words. Tell them I would pass to my city, and that they must bring me the silver arrow with speed. Go." There was no doubt now about his understanding Quichua. He turned instantly and was gone at a swift run. He did not even stay to pick up his weapons. When he had disappeared I beckoned to Huanaro, who stood watching us from the place where I had left him.

He prostrated himself at my feet, crying: "Even the Chunchos know my lord."

"Take up his weapons, Huanaro," I said. "He will return with the token, and can get them then."

We returned to the camp. The Indians were quiet, but there was an intensity in their faces that showed excitement. I tried to look unconcerned and think I succeeded pretty well.

Retiring to my room I set about thinking what was the next thing to be done. I had established communication with the Chunchos, and probably with the City itself. I had no doubt that in some way or other our journey would be continued. What was most important upon such a journey?

Undoubtedly something to eat. I summoned Huanaro and bade him see how much cornmeal was left. He soon reported that there was only enough for another day. Now the deserted plantations were full of sweet potatoes and juca that grew from the seed left by the former occupants. I could have subsisted an army there. So I decided to save the meal for an emergency, and subsist on the stores afforded by the ground. There was no dearth of meats. Game abounded, especially birds. I also put carefully away the remaining coffee. This done there was nothing to do but wait. We kept a vigilant watch against surprise, day and night, for we did not have much confidence in the Chunchos. Day after day passed, but no one came. I began to feel anxious. What could be the meaning of the delay? Huanaro solved the problem with a question. On the morning of the fifth day of our waiting he asked me how far it was to the City, saying he thought the token should be with us during the day if the distance was not more than seventy leagues.

"It will depend upon how fast the messenger can travel," I replied coolly; but I had received my first hint of the distance we had to cover. Sure enough on the evening of the fifth day a band of four Chunchos appeared at the edge

of the forest. They did not halt this time, but came steadily to the camp. We recognized the savage who had first visited us as a member of the party. He was still without arms. When they reached the fire, by which we were standing, he stepped toward me and presented to me a small package wrapped in a piece of cloth that looked like silk of most exquisite texture.

It was with difficulty I kept my hand from trembling as I received it. Here was the mysterious token at last. What hand had sent it? What fate was to result from obedience to its summons? I unwrapped the silk and there lay within a small arrow of silver. It was about four inches in length, perfect in every detail even to the engraved grain of the feather, and weighed about half an ounce. Round its shaft was tied a black cord in which was a single knot, and a scarlet cord similarly knotted. The point was wrapped in scarlet cotton carefully secured.

I looked long and earnestly at the symbol, striving to understand its full meaning. The arrow was the form of summons of which I had heard long ago. The covered point meant a friendly token. The scarlet cord must mean myself, and would indicate that the sender had been informed of the character I had assumed. The black cord must mean my followers. I turned

and handed it to Huanaro. He pressed it first to his forehead, and then to his heart, and then examined it. At once he uttered an exclamation of dismay. Then turning to me he knelt at my feet. "My father," he cried, "there is but one knot. But one of your children can go. I pray you let it be Huanaro."

I turned to the other Quichuas. "Is there any reason why another should go instead of Huanaro?" I asked. They looked silently at each other.

Then Juan said: "Huanaro cannot return to Cuzco, for he has broken the law. We can return. Let it be Huanaro."

"You can go with me, Huanaro," I said, "and whatever our welcome at the City Without a Name it shall be the same for both of us. Now give this man his weapons which he was in too great a hurry to take the other day."

The fellow took his weapons without any sign of gratitude or resentment. "We will be ready when the sun rises, and will go with you," I said.

The savages seemed content with the arrangement, and proceeded to make themselves comfortable for the night. They took possession of a hut near by and threw themselves down upon the dirty floor, evidently waiting for supper. When it was ready they ate voraciously, and im-

mediately lay down and went to sleep. They evidently had more faith in us than we had in them. Our sentinels were never more watchful than they were that night, but the Chunchos slept soundly and kept no guard. I had all the cornmeal baked into thin dry cakes and packed it into the bundle Huanaro carried. There was no danger of the Quichuas lacking food, but I was about to enter a land whence no man had ever returned to tell what it contained, and it was wisdom to carry as much food as possible. At daybreak I called my men to my hut and gave each more money than he had ever before owned in his life. They were full of reverence and gratitude, and I believe they would have braved every danger and gone with me had I desired it.

By sunrise we had breakfasted, and as the bright rays greeted us we started on our journey, two of the Chunchos leading the way and two following us at a short distance. They were a glum and silent set of fellows, every one of them fit for the gallows. They said nothing either to us or to each other, but strode swiftly toward the woods by the river. Following the stream some two miles we came to a large canoe hidden in the bushes. This we entered and headed down the stream, which followed a tortuous course,

mainly to the northward. All day long we traveled thus, and landed an hour before night to camp. They had no food with them, and as soon as the boat was secured the chief villain made signs to us to wait there, pointing to the woods and then to a small earthen pot in the boat to indicate that they would kill something for supper. Then they left us alone. Evidently we were not prisoners.

I was tired of sitting so long, and taking my rifle sauntered along the bank. As I stood looking wistfully down the stream I heard a slight rustle. It proved to be caused by a small deer coming for his evening drink. He was an easy prey to my rifle, and I went back to the boat and sent Huanaro to fetch him in. When the Chunchos returned half an hour later they found supper under way. They brought a pair of rabbits but threw them away when they saw the deer. The next day was a repetition of the first except that an hour or two before night we left the boat and walked half a mile out into the forest. There we found a rude shelter made of poles leaning against a ridgeline and covered with brush and leaves. Under this there lounged half a dozen Chunchos. A woman of supernatural hideousness was cooking their supper in an earthen pot. They paid but scant attention to

us as we arrived, but I noticed that one of them immediately rose from his seat and set off northward through the forest at a brisk trot. This, I realized, must be a regular courier station. The ground around us was well trodden, and the pot sat on quite a large heap of ashes and charred remains of former fires.

When supper was ready every man helped himself without invitation, and the stew did not taste nearly so bad as the appearance of the cook would lead one to expect. I ate a cake of our corn bread, and gave one to Huanaro.

Next morning we started on foot, with only one guide. There was quite a visible path through the forest, and though the way would have been impossible for horses it presented no great obstacles to pedestrians. At night we rested at another station like the former. The next night we came suddenly upon a great clearing along the banks of a river, and along its margin was a street composed of two rows of conical huts facing each other. There were hundreds of them, all mean and miserable alike. My heart sank within me. Was this the wonderful city I had come to seek, hoping for great good fortune? I glanced at Huanaro. He was looking contemptuously at the place. Catching my eye he merely shrugged his shoulders, and

said in a low voice, "Paititi."* I was no wiser than before. The guide led us to a hut in the edge of the town and motioned us to enter. We did so, but I came out again immediately. It was dark, dirty and ill smelling, and I determined that it should take a strong reason to make me sleep in such a den. The guide left us, but in ten minutes returned with what I could see was a party of notables. They wore aprons of feathers round their waists, and circlets of feathers on their heads. They were painted and striped prodigiously, and each bore a rude but formidable spear in his hand. They stopped before our hut and returned our gaze steadily. At length one of them said in excellent Quichua: "Who are you, and what do you want here?" Now on seeing them approach I had opened my hunting shirt to show my costume, thinking it would be effectual now if ever. Pointing to the sun on my breast I replied: "This should tell you who and what I am. This silver arrow shows you what I want."

They looked at me in silence. Then without a word they turned and left us. In a short time some girls brought us earthen dishes with potatoes, yams and fish. We ate heartily, Huanaro serving me until I had finished. He evidently

* Py-tee'-tee.

intended to impress observers with my great dignity, for he was more servile than I had ever before seen him. After supper the girls lingered and loitered with so little intention of leaving us that I finally bade Huanaro send them away. They went, giggling and laughing like school-girls, and evidently thinking poorly of our manners.

Next morning the same notables visited us again. The one who had spoken to me the previous night again addressed me. "Will it please you to rest awhile in Paititi, or would you proceed at once to the City?" he inquired. My heart gave a throb of relief. Then there was a city, after all my fears of last night.

"I will go without delay," I answered.

"You will say to the The Shining One that the Moceteres* have cared well for his guests," he retorted, and went his way.

In a few minutes two warriors appeared, and announced their readiness to start. As we resumed our march the party of Chuncho girls who had brought us our supper appeared with bowls of chicha which they offered us for a parting drink. I had never been able to bring myself to taste the vile decoction of juca and water mixed with saliva and fermented, until it becomes intox-

* Moceteres, the Quichua name for Chunchos,

icating, and I declined. Huanaro accepted the civility, and drank a liberal quantity, thanking the girls with a smile. We followed the course of the river, which ran northeast, and I wondered why canoes were not afforded for the journey. Ere long, however, I saw the reason. The stream was broken by precipitous falls, succeeding each other at intervals of a few miles. About midday we lost sight of the river, which turned to the eastward, and our way lay through tangled forests of true tropical appearance. There was a well-defined road or path, sufficiently wide for two men to walk abreast. There was evidently a frequent intercourse maintained between Paititi and the City Without a Name. We saw but little game, though occasionally the cry of a bird or the howl of a monkey came from a distance. We traveled fully twenty-five miles that day, passing a courier station by the roadside. That night we rested at still another one. They seemed to be about fifteen miles apart. The next morning, while breakfast was being prepared, I took my rifle and sauntered a few hundred yards from the camp. I soon came to a little stream, scarcely larger than a brook, and saw in the soft dirt at its margin the prints of the feet of various animals. I wondered if one might not come to take his morning drink, and concluded to con-

ceal myself among some bushes and watch a little while. I waited until I was tired of standing motionless, but not a sound broke the dead silence. The stillness was oppressive, and I turned to go back to camp. As I stepped into the open ground of the little glade by the stream I found myself face to face with a huge jaguar, not twenty feet away. It would be hard to say which of us was most astonished. We stared at each other a second and at the same instant the beast crouched and I threw my rifle to my shoulder. There was no time for consideration. With a quick sight between his eyes I pulled the trigger. With the report of the gun he launched himself through the air. I dodged and fell into the bushes by my side as his great body flashed by me, his red mouth wide open and his cruel claws outstretched to grasp me. I thought my last moment had come, though I tried to draw my knife. To my astonishment instead of turning and throwing himself upon me the beast lay there on the spot where I had stood, and clawed and groveled and struggled in a horrible manner. I lay motionless with terror. Presently he became more quiet. The struggles recurred at longer intervals, and in a few minutes he moved no more. Could it be possible that he was dead. For a long time I did not dare to

move, and when I did so it was away from him. Finally I recovered my self-control and made a cautious survey. There was no doubt about it. He lay there dead, with a red hole between his eyes. Thankfully I picked up my rifle and returned to the camp. I ate my breakfast without saying anything of my adventure. Then, when we were getting ready to start I told Huanaro that I had killed a fine jaguar half a mile from camp, and perhaps it might be worth while to save his skin. He looked at me in astonishment.

Then in a few words he told the savages of the game, and without a word, but with evident excitement, they started out after him, following my trail as readily as a dog follows that of a deer. It was fully an hour before they returned with the skin, and I could see that I had raised myself vastly in their estimation. I learned afterward that the only religion of the Chunchos is the worship of power. This they see in the tempest, the earthquake, the bear, the jaguar, and the python, and they worship them all.

Their worship is of fear only, hence they do not resent the destruction of their gods. But no warrior ever attacks a jaguar. Hence my feat was one almost beyond their belief.

That night we reached a post of an entirely different character, guarded by men of a different

race. It was a long, low adobe building, with a roof of heavy wooden slabs hewn with tools. About a hundred men, armed and uniformed, lounged about the place. As our party approached a note was sounded on a very deep, mellow horn.

Instantly they formed into two ranks, and stood facing us. On either flank was stationed one whose dress proclaimed him an officer. In the rear stood the commander, with a subaltern on either side. At sight of the station I knew that now, at last, I had reached the people I came to seek. Calling a brief halt I removed the buckskin hunting shirt and leggings, revealing my Inca costume. I retained the helmet as better suited to a traveler. Huanaro placed the garments in the knapsack, and looked with evident approval upon my appearance. Then we approached the station. When within fifty yards of the line I halted. As I did so the troop opened in the center and the three officers came through and toward me. They came within twenty feet and halted. After looking steadily at us a moment the chief said in Quichua: "We have been expecting you. By what name and title may I call my lord?" Now I had anticipated these questions and had my answer ready.

"I am called Huron," I answered; "and my

title shall be announced by the Shining One when he has seen me." You see I had utilized the slight knowledge to be gleaned from the message sent by the Chuncho chief, and I had hit the mark. The officer came a step further toward me, knelt upon the ground, touched it with his hand and then carried the hand to his forehead. Then he arose. The other two followed his example.

Then he said: "My lord is evidently the friend of the Shining One. Enter and rest, for to-morrow you will wish to travel far."

I bowed. Then turning to the Chunchos, who stood stolidly looking on, I said: "Tell your curaca* from Huron, I am with my people, and will commend him to the Shining One."

They turned and went their way, and I could see that my message had had the intended effect upon my new acquaintances.

* *Curaca*, Quichua for *chief*.

CHAPTER VI.

AMAM-MAYU LAND.

I WAS conducted to a nice, clean room, about sixteen feet square. The ceiling was about ten feet high. The walls were smoothly plastered and whitewashed. The floor was covered with mats of skins dressed with the fur. At one side a hammock of netted twine, variously colored, invited my tired bones to rest. Two or three little tables, no higher than the seat of a chair, were standing about the room. I should have mistaken them for seats had it not chanced that in passing an open door I saw some men seated on the floor round a similar piece of furniture.

The door was fitted with a strong wooden shutter hung on hinges of a dark metal that I afterward knew to be bronze. On the side opposite the door was a small, unglazed window, about six feet from the floor. It was evidently intended more for ventilation than for observation, and was provided with a curtain of woolen material. But the most interesting thing in the

room was a large mirror of polished silver standing against the wall to the right. It was as high as my head, about two and a half feet wide, and framed in an elegant design in polished bronze. The officer waved his hand toward a beautiful spotted skin rug and prayed me to rest myself. Huanaro deposited my knapsack and rifle in a corner and then, after prostrating himself, went out. I reclined upon the skin with a sigh of contentment. What luxury, after the toils of the forest. I looked at the officer critically. It was my desire to make friends whenever it was possible among this people, but I knew that it would not do to show it. Therefore I waited some time before speaking. Then I said: "This is a pleasant change, after the wilderness. Your post is clean and comfortable, and your men seem well drilled." The officer was pleased.

"My lord," he said, "it is a post of importance and it would be wrong to neglect anything that might weaken it. Therefore we keep it clean that it may not have sickness; and it is pleasant because the Inca comes to inspect it at times not known beforehand, and it would not fare well with those who showed a lack of care and neatness." Then I understood that this was the room of state, and that I was indeed an honored guest. The officer spoke again: "Will it please

my lord to rest at the post for a day, or will he continue his journey in the morning?"

"I will go in the morning," I replied. "How long will it take to reach the city?"

"If you start in the morning the noon of the next day will see you at the palace," he answered. I made a mental calculation. A day and a half should mean about fifty miles, I thought. I wondered whether the city was in the center of its territory, or upon one side. A land a hundred miles square would be quite a kingdom. The officer bowed, and backed out of the room. Soon two men entered bearing large flat trays covered with dishes containing food. The trays were draped with clean white cloth. The dishes were of polished silver. They set each tray upon one of the low tables and placed them before me. Then they retired, but soon returned with three or four cups of silver, and some earthen jars of liquids, evidently for drinking. As they were about to go out I said:

"Send to me my servant, Huanaro." He came and stood behind me as I ate. It was a meal that would tempt the most blasé of epicures. There were fish broiled in plantain leaves, barbecued shoat, broiled venison, roasted pheasant, baked sweet potatoes, corn cakes, a pudding of something like tapioca, cakes of brown sugar

flavored with an aromatic, and other good things which I have forgotten. The jars contained red and white wines, and, horrible to relate, chicha. The latter Huanaro carried to the other side of the room, at my request, and doubtless appropriated afterward. After that supper I felt sleepy, and it was not long before I was in the hammock wrapped in oblivion.

I was awakened at daylight by the entrance of Huanaro. I immediately arose, and was delighted to see the large basin of fresh water and huge soft towels he had brought for my bath.

Surely, thought I, in whatever else this people may lack knowledge, they know how to make one comfortable. When my toilet was completed Huanaro craved permission to ask me a question.

"What is it," I inquired.

"My lord," he said, "these people worship the sun. At his rising they all meet to worship him. I am a Christian. What must I do?"

I had not thought of this before, and it was a puzzle indeed. It would not do to arouse their hostility by refusal to participate with them in their religious ceremonies, yet I was determined not to turn idolater. I could not answer this important question offhand, so I told him to watch me, and do as I did. I had no idea what I should do until the moment for action

came. I was never much of a praying man, though when I have wanted anything I have asked my God to give it to me if it was for the best. I wanted something now, and I asked for it. In the privacy of that room with its barbaric splendor I asked my Maker to so inspire my heart with wisdom that I might not dishonor His name and the teaching of my dear old dead mother, nor yet bring evil instead of good upon this remote people. "Sooner let me perish," I prayed, "than do either of these things." Then I felt easy again. In a few minutes the commanding officer stood in the open door, evidently expecting me to go out with him. Outside the troop stood in double rank with the lines a spear's length apart. There was an open space in the center of the lines, and on it was a small platform about a foot high, covered with a scarlet cloth. To this dais the officer conducted me, and as I stepped upon it I wondered what I ought to do. If I was to lead the services they must inevitably be of a character unknown to them before. Then all stood silently facing the east, where the fierce fires of the nearly visible sun were almost intolerably bright. Suddenly his fiery disk sprang above the horizon. Instantly every man's hands went upward, palms outward, and as with a single voice they shouted:

"Hail, father, hail!"

Then the officer looked at me as though he expected me to say something. I have never been able to decide how I happened to do it, but I found myself looking up into the sky, with hands clasped and arms extended, repeating the Lord's prayer in strong, slow, solemn tones, in the Quichua tongue. As my voice rang out upon the still air of the morning it seemed to me the voice of another, and not my own, beseeching the great God of nature to give us our daily bread, to preserve us from temptation and evil, to forgive us as we forgave others, and ascribing to him the glory forever. When I had finished I looked around me in a sort of a daze. The five officers of the troop came to the dais and performed the ceremony of kneeling and touching the ground. When they had arisen the commanding officer said humbly:

"I know now that my Lord is good, and it is well for Amam-Mayu Land that he has come to dwell there."

After breakfast they brought a sumptuous litter all gold and scarlet and yellow, from some place of storage, and this time I mounted it without any objections. It was time to be stylish, now, and it would also be comfortable. I took my rifle from Huanaro, to lighten his burden, for I

suspected that our speed would be greater than he was accustomed to. Eight men took up the litter, and we started at a swift pace directly northward. In front of me proceeded a company of twenty men, led by an officer. In another litter the commanding officer was borne behind me, and another company of soldiers followed him. I call them soldiers, and they were soldiers, good, loyal and brave; but they were very unlike those you are accustomed to see. They were Indians, of course, not very tall, their race averaging five feet five. They wore a uniform consisting of light blue cotton tunic belted round the waist; leggings of the same material reaching just below the knee, and a sort of rude sandals fastened by straps. This cotton uniform was padded with some material that would resist arrows, and quilted in artistic designs with thread of many colors. Upon their heads they wore small flat caps of metal, with leather rims to fit the forehead. Each man bore a stout, short bow, a sheaf of heavy arrows, a shield of rawhide, cut in oval shape, and a spear eight feet long, the head of which looked like burnished red gold, but proved to be of polished bronze, keen as a razor. From the belt hung a large knife, or short sword about eighteen inches long. They maintained regular order in their

march, and kept step perfectly. I did not wonder so much at their splendid discipline when I learned that from birth to death arms was their only profession, and obedience to the Inca and his officers their only duty. Their organization was simple and effectual.

The Quichuas, strange to say, have the same system of enumeration that is used by us. They count by ten and its multiples, as we do, away up to many thousands. Now their military and civil organizations are all based upon this numerical system. Their army, I may as well say now as at another time, consisted of ten thousand men, whose children were also born to become soldiers. These ten thousand men were divided into ten regiments, each under its own hereditary chief, who was a blood relation of the Incas. In case of his death, or inability from any cause, he was succeeded by his sons, unless the Inca directed otherwise. No law, civil, military or religious, could stand an instant against the will of the Inca. The regiments were each divided into ten companies of one hundred men, each with its hereditary captain. The companies were divided into squads of ten, each with its own hereditary head man. In his own sphere and to certain well-known limits the authority of all these officials

was absolute, and insubordination was so severely punished that it almost never occurred. In a similar manner the whole population of Amam-Mayu Land was organized, divided, and subdivided, and each province was thus directly under the control and observation of the great central authority. The Inca owns all the land. It is absolutely his; but he allows it to be occupied by the same families, generation after generation, so long as they observe the few simple but unavoidable obligations he imposes. They are these: To till one-third of the land for the Inca, one-third for the service of the Sun, and the remainder for the producer. Every inhabitant is compelled to work. Idleness is punished as severely as theft, for the same reason that it would cause the idler to depend upon the industry of others for his support. On the other hand, no one is allowed to suffer on account of misfortune, infirmity or old age. As each has built up the fortunes of the state he is entitled to its support when, from no fault of his own, he is no longer able to provide for himself.

There is no liberty and no oppression. A man must obtain permission from the head of his province before he can marry, but when he obtains it he obtains also a farm of the regulation size, and his neighbors are ordered to help him build and furnish his house.

The deformed and weakly are not allowed to marry, and the rigorous execution of this policy for centuries has rendered the existence of disease and deformity exceedingly rare. I strongly suspect that the disgrace of having such a child in the family interferes very much with the probabilities of its reaching maturity. No man is allowed to become what we would call independent. If his crop amounts to more than his necessities it is trimmed of its superfluity, and the surplus goes into the public granary. The wool and the cotton are spun and woven by hand, and each family does its share of the work, and receives what it needs regardless of the amount it produces. They are a mild, cheerful, contented people, with no fear of a destitute old age to haunt their lives, and with a certainty of a competency so long as they perform the easy tasks assigned. They are faithful in their marriage relations, tell no lies, and cannot be induced to shed human blood, however great the provocation, unless as soldiers in combat. Their houses are all alike except in the City. They are cottages, one story in height, with two rooms in front and a kitchen in the rear. The roof projects to form a shelter before the door, where they love to sit and chatter in the cool twilight, or swing and doze in hammocks during the noon rest hour.

They are fond of singing and dancing; and they all get drunk on feast days. Some get drunk on wine, but most of them stick to chicha. Such is the simple life of the Inca's people, the happiest, most free from care, and the best governed in the world; but living under the most intense despotism in existence.

We had not gone a mile ere we came to a place that excited my astonishment and admiration. We were in a narrow gorge between perpendicular cliffs of rock several hundred feet in height, when we came to the foot of a cyclopean wall built straight across the gorge. It was perpendicular, smooth as chisel could make it, and fifty feet high. All along the top could be seen piles of large stones ready to be hurled upon the head of any rash foe who should dare to attempt to scale the wall. I wondered how we were to surmount this obstacle, but soon saw. One of our escort sounded a long low note on a horn.

A rope ladder was thrown from the top of the wall and one by one we painfully ascended. The foot of the ladder was held steady by two men while we climbed, but it was tiresome work.

I do not mean that my whole party climbed the ladder, but that only one attacked it at a time. In fact the commanding officer, Huanaro and I were the only ones who went up. On the other side of the wall was a plateau, evidently of

artificial formation, upon which was the facsimile of the house wherein I had just spent the night, and before which stood the counterpart of the troop I had found there, resting in precisely the same formation. The same ceremonies ensued, excepting that my officer made a report to the new commanding officer before I was invited to approach. Then officer number two begged me to rest a few minutes in his house while the bearers were bringing out the litter. I found myself in a room precisely like the one I had previously occupied, and in ten minutes was on my way in a litter that I could not have distinguished from the first one. We descended from the plateau by an inclined plane, and I could hardly realize that I had changed conductors. At intervals of about three leagues we came to small posthouses, where we found relays of bearers. As the tired men were relieved they started back over the road they had come, while the fresh ones strode forward at a swift pace. The roads were broad, smooth, ditched on the sides, and free from the smallest pebbles. As we advanced the farms became more numerous, and fruit and shade trees overhung the way.

A more peaceful, prosperous country I never saw. The chief objection to it was the sameness of everything produced by the labor of the in-

habitants. True there were hills and valleys, streams and plains, but the fields were all the same size, with the same proportions of the same crops, the same succession of vines, fruits and shades, the same little whitewashed cottages at the same distance from the road, near which was the same pasture land inclosed in the same stone fence for the restraint of the same number of cows, sheep, and goats. The only variation seemed to be in the quantity and markings of the poultry, and that must have been because fowls are beyond the reach of regulating. The families, too, seemed all of the same size, though their ages varied. They all came to the roadside as we passed and did homage to the costume of the Inca. In this steady, monotonous, swift progress the day passed, and night found us fifty miles from our starting point, at a post station like the first. The next morning I repeated the Lord's prayer again, Huanaro muttering the same as he best could, and toward midday we found ourselves climbing a long hill upon whose summit the walls and towers of a great city gleamed white in the sun. Above everything else there towered high into the air a strange, mysterious structure, whose broken outlines and massive proportions spoke of masterful purpose and great power, and upon whose roofs gleamed the yellow sheen of burnished gold.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INCA.

WE now began to come to streets crossing at right angles the one along which we traveled. Not many persons were moving about, as it is the custom of the people to rest during the middle of the day; but the few we met seemed startled at the sight, and dropped upon their knees until we passed, some of them hiding their faces in their hands. The streets were narrow but straight. The houses were all of one story, built of sun-dried brick, but varied in the extent of their depth and frontage. They all stood about thirty feet from the roadway, and had fruit and shade trees before them. The effect was an embowered city extremely pleasant and inviting in its appearance. We proceeded thus about two miles through the streets, the roadway always ascending, when we finally entered a place that I can only describe as an immense square, treeless and open to the glaring sun, with its surface as smooth and level as a floor. This square was

about two thousand five hundred feet in diameter, or nearly half a mile. In its center rose a great pile of buildings combining the characteristics of fort and palace. Though it would have been defenseless against heavy artillery nothing less could assail it with any hope of success. The outer wall was about five hundred and fifty feet long on each side. It was only about twenty-five feet in height, and was covered with a roof of heavy slabs of wood, suggesting that the inner side was used as barracks for troops. Something over one hundred feet inside this wall there rose a tall, square structure with towers at the corners, and numerous narrow windows. These were so disposed as to indicate that the building was divided into two stories. This large square building seemed to be crowned by a massive tower rising fifty feet above its top. The tower was ornamented at the corners by round buttresses with low pinnacles. The whole structure was built of stone, and represented as much labor as would have built the great Egyptian pyramid. The conical-shaped roofs of the pinnacles were covered with a plating of gold that shone richly in the tropical sun. The roofing of the tower itself was concealed by a crenelated wall that surrounded it.

This structure, like the one it surmounted,

was lighted by numerous narrow windows, reminding one of loopholes for archers. Above each gate was floating, from a tall staff, a flag of scarlet and yellow. Similar flags surmounted every tower and gave a gay air to the otherwise somber appearance of the fortress. From the summit of the pinnacles waved banners entirely different from the others. Three of them were evidently intended to represent the rainbow. Their ground was light blue, and broad arched stripes of red, yellow and green extended their full length. The fourth was a white banner emblazoned with a scarlet sun. There was just enough breeze to display them to good advantage, and as they waved and fluttered they filled me with an eager wish to know their significance. The street we were traveling debouched in the center of the immense square, on the south side, directly opposite a great portal closed with massive doors sheathed in metal. They hung on huge hinges of bronze, and stood dark and sullen at the end of my journey. My escort advanced halfway across the parade and halted. There we stood, making no sign or sound, evidently waiting the pleasure of those within. I felt that unseen eyes were upon us, and sat with an appearance of indifference that I was far from feeling.

Suddenly the gates swung open, showing a short passageway between walls ending in a bright open court, beyond which the walls and towers of the second building were visible. Though the way was now open still we stirred not. After waiting several minutes I sent Huanaro to say to the officer in the litter behind me that I would speak with him. He was by my side in a moment. "May we not enter?" I said. "The way seems open."

"As my lord wills," he answered. "It is for him to say if he will enter. It is for another to say how and when he shall come out again."

I had gone too far to hesitate under such circumstances. "Bid the escort enter," I said, and leaned back in my litter. Steadily we crossed the parade and entered the wide gateway. They bore my litter straight across the inner courtyard, which was about thirty yards wide, and toward a square arched doorway beneath a central tower in the palace. A broad flight of steps led up to the door, and as we approached them a gorgeously dressed official made his appearance there as though waiting for us. My bearers set the litter down and I dismounted with all the dignity I could assume. The officer who had come with me now took his place at my side, and together we ascended the steps. The waiting

official scanned me curiously, and though he evidently tried to look unconcerned I could see that my appearance filled him with astonishment. I returned his gaze with a cold haughtiness and made as though I would pass by him without speaking. Then he found his tongue and addressed me with great courtesy.

"I am sent to meet my lord, and to show him his apartments," he said.

"It is well," I answered. "Let my servant, Huanaro, follow us."

"Those were not my instructions," he said.

"Was it forbidden?" I asked.

"It was not spoken of," was his reply.

"Then he will go with me," I said with decision. He made no further objections. I turned and said to the officer of the escort: "You have performed your duty faithfully. Accept the thanks of Huron."

Then I followed my new guide. He led me up the broad steps. I counted them. They were ten, about twenty feet in length, and of solid stone.

The entrance to the building was a broad, square opening, about twenty feet wide by fifteen high. A single huge square stone spanned the distance from side to side over our heads, causing me to wonder how they ever got it there

without steam power. The hall we entered extended clear through the building, which seemed about fifty feet deep with a frontage of three hundred feet.

Through the opening at the other side the stone pavement of the hall continued out on a broad corridor which had columns on either side and conducted one to an inner building one hundred feet wide and four stories in height. It was the structure that from outside the walls had seemed to me to be a huge tower surmounting the second building. I now saw that it was separated from this building by a space of thirty or more yards and connected with it only by the corridors. Before reaching the corridor we turned into a broad recess at our right and ascended a flight of stone steps to the second story. Here I found a broad gallery, opening into the courtyard between it and the central tower, and running apparently clear across the east, south and west sides. From this gallery numerous doorways led into the multitude of rooms into which the second floor was divided.

We proceeded eastward along the gallery to where it turned to the north. When we had taken that direction we paused before a doorway whose curtain was swung open. My conductor pointed to the door.

"These are your apartments. Will it please you to examine them that I may tell my master, the Inca, whether his guest is pleased?"

I entered the room and looked around me. It was very much like the apartments shown me at the regimental posts, except that there were narrow slits like loopholes, in the masonry, in lieu of windows. The floor was entirely covered with the dressed skins of wild beasts. This was evidently a matter of choice and not of necessity, for the *portière* at the door was of rich woolen stuff, and small curtains at the window slits were of some sort of yellow and red material like silk, richly embroidered with gold thread. At the southern end of the room hung another *portière*. I conjectured that it concealed a doorway, and raised it. It led into a larger apartment much more sumptuously furnished. There were rugs, and skins, and cushions, and a beautiful couch upon a frame of redwood, covered with snowy cotton drapery. There were windows on two sides of the room, showing that it occupied a corner of the building. Several of the little tables I had learned to understand were scattered about the apartment, but they were elaborately carved, and ornamented with studs and bosses of silver. A large mirror of silver stood against the southern wall between two loopholes. On the

western side of the room hung another *portière*. Investigation showed that it concealed a room of plain gray stone. There was a depression in the center of the floor about six feet square, and into this there flowed from a jet at its margin a constant stream of water. The outflow was visible on the other side of the bath. There was a plain couch covered with woolen stuff at one side of the room, and large, soft towels hung upon a rack. A plain gourd, cut to form a drinking cup, lay on a little table. That was all there was in the room, but it made me feel more at home than anything else I had seen for many a day.

Turning to my guide I said: "Pray tell the Inca that there is nothing left to be desired, and that I thank him and his officials for their kind forethought."

The officer bowed. "There is another thing I am bidden to say to the guest of the Inca. He is a stranger here, and perhaps does not know our customs. This might lead him to do something which would lead to troublesome consequences. Therefore the Bright One requests that you confine yourself to this wing of the palace until you have had time to learn its ways."

"Am I to understand that I must not go down

the stairs, or into the courtyard below?" I asked.

"Oh, no," he answered. "It will be right for you to go down by the way we have come, and walk in the inner courtyard, or sit by the fountain. And there are offices below, with open doors, that you may wish to enter. But you are requested not to cross the corridor, or go through the door where I had the honor to receive you."

"I will observe the wishes of your master," I replied. "Is it forbidden for me to ask by what name I may call you, and what is your official position?"

"I am called Quantal," he answered. "I am curaca, or chief, of the thousand whose duty it is to guard the palace this term."

"I shall hope to see you often, curaca," I said. "I am, as you say, a stranger to your customs. But I am a friend to your people and would do nothing to displease them if it were possible to avoid it. Tell me, therefore, without hesitation, anything you think likely to prevent my making any such mistakes."

The curaca looked steadily in my face for a minute. Then he said: "That is a wise request. We have nothing to fear from you, a solitary stranger. You may have much to fear from us.

If you are unworthy the Bright One will know. If you are good, why should you be allowed to make mistakes. Tell me, therefore, if you will, why you wear this symbol?" and he reverently touched the golden sun.

"To indicate my rank. This, also, I wear for the same reason."

As I said this I placed the turban on my head. The officer recoiled a step and looked astonished. Then he smiled and said: "The llautu! There is but one in Amam-Mayu Land who can wear that, and you are not he."

"You are right," I answered. "In Amam-Mayu Land I do not wear it," and detaching it from the turban I handed him the little ball of scarlet silk."

He took it gravely. "I am to tell the Bright One, then, that you are of a royal race?" he asked.

"You are to tell the Bright One what you have seen and heard," I said. "When it is his pleasure to see me no question of his shall remain unanswered."

The officer smiled. "I perceive that my lord is wise. It is hard to say the same thing twice through different lips."

He bowed and left us. Huanaro had remained with me, and stood looking wistfully after the chief.

"What are you thinking of, Huanaro?" I inquired when he had stood thus for at least a minute.

"He did not say where I was to stay, or if I might cross the hall below," was the answer.

"It is better for you to remain where I am quartered, for the present, and not to cross the hall," I told him. "You will stay in the outer room, and if any one comes in detain him there until you have permission to bring him in here."

All that afternoon I lay in my room, resting and thinking. I knew the slow way the Indians had of doing things, and did not expect to be carried before the Inca that day. I could hear the hum of low voices and the steps of many people through my narrow windows, but when I looked out through them could see only the barracks across the outer courtyard. They surrounded the palace and were built against the outer wall, on its inner side. They were only open sheds, and I saw they were intended to be exposed to the loopholes of the palace. Thus a force in the palace would command any force in the barracks, though they in turn could resist any foe outside the walls. As the setting sun neared the horizon I heard a long, low note or call sounded by a horn, and everything became so strangely quiet that I rose and looked out of a

loophole. To my surprise the whole garrison was standing in four ranks on the roof of the barracks. Every face was turned toward the west where I knew the sun must be setting, though it was impossible for me to see it. Suddenly every hand was raised to the westward and they shouted something I did not understand. Then there was another interval of silence. Presently I heard soft music, as though some one were singing in the distance. It soon ceased, and then the companies broke ranks and came down from the roof by wooden stairways at the corners. Soon after this ceremony was completed two men came into the anteroom bearing trays of food. Huanaro received the trays, one by one, and set them before me. I decided to admit no one to my presence but dignitaries, for thus I would still further insist upon the rank I had assumed.

The servants went away and returned with wines, coffee and cocoa. I was gratified to notice that no chicha was provided. I ate heartily, and laid myself down to rest with as great a sense of comfort and security as heart could wish. The next morning the troops again assembled upon the roof, this time to greet the rising of their god. Breakfast soon followed, and was entirely satisfactory. After breakfast I

concluded to take an airing in the courtyard so I made a careful toilette. I concluded to wear my helmet instead of the turban, for I felt that to be a delicate point in my costume.

Telling Huanaro to admit no one until my return I sauntered carelessly along the gallery, down the stone stairway, into the long, wide corridor that led to the central tower, and then down the steps on the right that led into the courtyard beneath my gallery. I met many people in many different costumes as I went along, some sauntering like myself, some hurrying earnestly by. The going and coming was incessant. Few looked at me, and no one spoke to me, so that I reached the little fountain in the center without learning anything. Some masses of hewn stone were conveniently disposed for seats, and I appropriated one at a place whence it was convenient to watch the corridor. It did not take long for me to decide that that central tower contained an object of interest to a multitude of people. Men in the garb of soldiers, officers, servants, citizens, priests, and many whose characters I could not determine, passed rapidly in and out of the great portal and along the corridor. Among them I saw, now and then, an Indian chief of some wild tribe, barbarous in paint and feathers. I nowhere saw any arms.

So far as I could judge the revolver hidden in my bosom was the only weapon near me. I wondered if the potentate whom all seemed to dread and revere kept no bodyguard about his person. I sat there solitary, full of wonder at the strange sights, until the sun peered over the palace roof and down into the courtyard. Then, it being very hot, I sought my rooms. About eleven o'clock Quantal appeared. Huanaro ushered him into my apartment, where he greeted me deferentially, but pleasantly.

He inquired how I had slept; whether I had everything my comfort required, and then asked whether it would please me to be conducted to the Inca presently. Of course I understood the veiled command, and prepared to accompany him. The preparation did not take much time. It consisted merely in donning the turban, now shorn of its scarlet ball. "I am ready," I said.

Without a word he turned and led the way. We traversed the corridor and entered the immense hall at its end. It was about thirty feet wide and seventy-five long. It was entered by climbing ten solid stone steps. Three large doors led out at regular intervals on either side of this great passage. There was no sign of ornamentation anywhere. The *portières* on the right were of scarlet. Those on the left were of

yellow. The latter were swung wide open, revealing a long high hall filled with a confusion of beautiful tables, couches, rugs, mirrors, vases of ferns and flowers, and feather screens. Many people wandered restlessly about the splendid room, or rested on the divans along the walls. These walls were so covered with curtains and hangings of bewildering variety that the cold stone was nowhere visible. No guards were in the room or about its doors. By the scarlet curtains on the other side of the hall stood the first armed force I had seen in the palace. Each door was guarded by two soldiers in pure white uniforms. Their weapons were savage-looking short spears, with long, sharp two-edged blades, a short sword by the side, and a small shield of bronze, polished to the utmost brilliancy. I noticed that their hair was very long hanging in heavy black masses over the shoulders. Each wore a flat cap of bronze, secured to a leathern brim, an excellent protection against a club or sword stroke.

They held their spears crossed before the door and none entered or departed without their scrutiny. This resulted in a continual raising and lowering of the spears, and it was some time before I discovered that they received their orders from a low voice within the curtains.

Quantal led me into the open room at the left and motioned me to a couch. I reclined thereon, while he stood before me. As I sat there waiting I noticed that every few minutes an official clothed in a uniform of blue, trimmed freely with scarlet and yellow, would enter, beckon to some one, and conduct him across the hall into the room beyond. While I was wondering how long it would be before he came for me a short, slight man, of a light copper color, dressed in a gorgeous costume of scarlet and yellow profusely ornamented with gold embroidery, sauntered up to where we were, and stopping in front of me, stared insolently at me from head to foot.

At his approach Quantal bowed himself to the ground and touching his hand to the floor raised it to his forehead. By this ceremony I knew some high dignitary stood before me. I determined that no dignitary save the Inca should crow over me, so after returning his gaze as coolly as it was given I said to Quantal: "Curaca, I perceive that a person of rank is pleased to observe me; pray inform me of his name and rank, that I may know the degree of deference due him." This I said without removing my eyes from the face of the stranger.

"My lord," said Quantal in a low voice, "it is the lord Anahuac, prince of the royal blood,

cousin to Hualpa Capac, the Shining One beloved of the Sun."

I felt a shock of disappointment at these words. Without any reason for the feeling I had anticipated something different from this in the men that ruled this mysterious city. The prince was most insignificant in his personal appearance. His gorgeous costume only served to remind me of a monkey at a circus. If this was the sort of men I had to deal with my chances were poor indeed. A sensation of hostility was born in my bosom the instant our glances crossed. His eyes fell before mine, and with a gesture of impatience he turned away. At that instant the usher approached us, but instead of addressing me or Quantal he spoke humbly to the prince. I saw the latter give an angry start at his words. Then he suddenly turned to us again and speaking to Quantal said:

"It is the will of the Inca that I shall conduct this stranger to his place in the hall of judgment. I rose to follow him, saying:

"I am highly honored to have such a conductor." Then he spoke to me for the first time:

"You may be sure it is a pleasure to me to take you there," he said, and the look he gave the chief was so full of sinister meaning that I

glanced at him for an explanation. There was no time for that. He simply waved a good-by with his hand, and I could read compassion in his face. The prince strode across the broad hall and at his approach the spears were lifted, the scarlet curtains were brushed aside, and we entered. The room was but dimly lighted by loopholes on the right side, showing a silent gathering of many people. The size of the hall was about forty feet wide by at least eighty in length, though this I could not judge at that time owing to the obscurity. To make matters more confusing my conductor left me standing alone in the center of the room. Immediately over my head was a vertical opening clear through the ceiling to the sky. It was like a huge chimney, ten feet in diameter. Through it the vertical rays of a tropical sun poured down upon me, making the stones on which I stood almost too hot to be borne. Standing in this glare everything in the room was blotted from my sight. I could only see that there was something white in front of me, and it was some seconds before it resolved itself into a troop of white-clad soldiers. I could also make out that to the right and left there was a crowd of silent spectators. There was an oppressive hush all about me that seemed to imply that something

was about to happen, and I wondered what it could be. After a few moments a soft voice somewhere in front of me began chanting a sort of recitative in Quichua. It ran like this, and it made a queer creepy feeling play up and down my spine:

"Who shall stand before the wrath of the Sun? How shall lying and wickedness hide from his face? Who is he that dares to challenge his judgment, the judgment of the Father of the Bright One?"

There was a brief silence and then another, harsher voice, the voice of a man chanted: "Father of the Bright One, God of Amam-Mayu Land, behold and judge." A moment of intense silence succeeded, followed by a rustle and a murmur as at some surprise. It quickly subsided and again there was silence.

Then, for the first time I heard a voice whose tones, once heard could never be forgotten. Smooth, cold, passionless, low but not deep, it swept through the silence. It said:

"Stranger, you have dared many dangers to come and stand where no man ever before stood of his own will. You have endured the judgment of the sun, and he has spared you, that you may answer before him. As you shall answer so shall it fare with you in the final test. Declare

now your name, and country, and station, and the reason for your coming, that you may receive the final judgment."

I felt during the few moments that followed the sensation that one feels at hearing the rattle of a snake at night and knows not which way to turn to avoid the stroke. I knew my life was in imminent danger, and realized that my revolver would be useless against the peril, whatever form it might assume.

The white-clad soldiers stood quiet and motionless; the spectators were passive and inoffensive; yet I felt that death was hovering over me in some strange form against which I was helpless. In despair of knowing the right thing to say I began with the simple truth, couching it in the picturesque forms peculiar to their tongue, yet ever keeping in mind my assumed character.

"I cannot see you, O Mysterious One, else I would look into your eyes, and let you read the truth in mine. I come from the far East, where the sun shines brightly while yet you sleep in waiting for the dawn. Many and wonderful things are there for study and use and pleasure, but I tired of them all, and came to this western land, seeking I knew not what. Still I was not satisfied. I felt that somewhere there awaited me an unknown fate of good or evil, prepared for

me by our great Father, and I could not rest until I had found it. I believe he has led me hither to meet it, and whatever it may be I am content. I heard of you and your people through a rumor so slight and vague that few believed it, and day after day I felt an impulse drawing me hither, until at last I ceased to resist it. Braving every danger I have come, and none have hindered me, but all have aided me, because our Father willed it so. Because it was so willed I am here. In my country I am of a birth that entitles me to rule over an immense territory should the people select me to reign. Hence I wear these garments to indicate my rank.

"Now that I am here, O Shining One, it is for you to say what shall follow. I have brought great knowledge that might serve you well. My hands and heart and knowledge are at your service. Do with me what you will."

When I had ceased speaking there was another long silence. I felt that all were waiting for something to happen to me, and in a dazed sort of way I wondered what it was. I felt no fear; only a sense of helpless submission to fate possessed me. At last that wonderful voice spoke again, calm, clear, piercing, judicial.

"Who shall deceive the Sun, who sees all

things?" it said. "You have stood face to face with him and with me, and you have spoken truth. For one lie his wrath would have consumed you. Advance from the place of judgment and come nearer to me, I would speak further with you."

In obedience to his command I stepped forward and left the insufferable light and heat of the sun behind me. I had taken some ten steps when I found myself face to face with the front rank of the white-clad soldiery. They did not move, and hardly looked at me, but I saw I had gone far enough. I saw also something that had hitherto escaped my attention. These soldiers were women. None of the softness we are accustomed to associate with the idea of women appeared in their faces. Their expression was cold and pitiless. I felt they would as soon kill a man as a snake.

I halted in front of them, and looked beyond them. My eyes, relieved from the glare of the spot whereon I had been standing, began to discern surrounding objects more distinctly. Just behind the phalanx of Amazons rose a dais some four feet high. Behind it waved massive curtains of some material colored to represent the rainbow. Just as I had noticed these things the room was suddenly darkened. The light rapidly died away until we were in absolute

darkness, and I stood bewildered, knowing not which way to turn. Suddenly a glow of tremulous light began to undulate in front of me. As it slowly brightened it assumed the form of a man standing upon the dais. From head to foot he glittered and shimmered and sparkled, and the light dawned and brightened, until he was absolutely dazzling. Nowhere else in that vast hall was there a ray of light, and this beautiful illumination transfigured him into a shape of unearthly dignity and grandeur. A shout of adoration, so loud, so hearty, so sincere, that it demonstrated utter faith in the supernatural character of the event, arose from the assembly. The bright figure stood motionless for a few moments. Then the hand was slowly waved. Instantly every little window was undraped and the sunlight poured into the hall. The whole bright scene flashed into view like a vision.

The Inca stood in the center of the dais. On either hand, but at some distance, and lower by two feet than his own station, stood men clad in priestly garments, and women clothed in white. My previous knowledge of their customs enabled me to decide that they were Virgins of the Sun, and priests of his temple. The central figure riveted my attention. As nearly as I could judge he was about five feet ten inches in stature,

which is tall for his race. Upon his head was a turban of the rainbow colors from which rose two tall, straight feathers of vivid scarlet, the like of which I had never seen. The lower part of the turban was a scarlet band of fringe from which a large, round, glowing ruby hung between the eyes. A tunic of scarlet, loosely fitting the bust, was belted round a slender waist with a belt of gold, and fell in graceful folds below the knee. It fitted closely round the throat, where it was secured by a tall collar of gold cloth. At neck and sleeves and wrist it was ornamented with bands of gold cloth and fringe. A pair of light-blue leggings, reaching halfway from knee to ankle, terminated in a fringe of gold. His feet were small, arched and delicate, shod with sandals with straps of silver tissue. From head to foot every portion of his dress was incrustated thick with glittering stones of diamond-like luster that shimmered and glittered brilliantly with every movement. But that regal face. How shall words describe it! As I stood before the dais it looked down at me with a calm, steady, judicial gaze, full of penetration and conscious power. The perfection of its outlines was startling. The forehead was broad, and though not high, it was straight and noble. From its upper border down to the end of the

long, delicate, sensitive nose, was a perfectly straight line. The eyebrows were delicate, and perfectly horizontal. Beneath them burned, with steady somber fire, large, dark, hazel eyes, with tawny gleams coming and going in their depths, like the light in the eyes of the lion that lies watching you through the bars. But the strangest feature was his skin; for though the eyes were so dark and gloomy, and the hair like polished ebony, the face was light olive in color, with the rich blood glowing through cheek and lip. Like most of his race he was beardless. His bearing was so strong, so stately, so grand, that I can call it nothing but majestic.

There we stood, five paces apart, and gazed into each other's eyes for a full minute.

Then, at some signal that I did not perceive, the white troop opened to right and left, and there was nothing between me and the steps of the dais. With a sudden impulse I stepped to the foot of the steps and knelt upon one knee. Then I took off the turban and laid it beside me. The words I spoke were incoherent, but sincere, for that brief gaze into those tawny eyes had fascinated me.

"O Bright and Beautiful One," I exclaimed, "is it you that has drawn me hither? Was it your will, or that of some unearthly

power, that called me from those distant regions to kneel at your feet; I, who have never before bowed the knee to any save our Father who is in heaven? I know not. I only know that I am here, and that I am content."

No response came from the lips of the Inca. He still looked steadily into my face, but I saw a slow flush gradually steal over his countenance, like a blush on the face of a pleased woman. So long he stood silent that I feared it was the flush of anger. At last he said:

"Your words and your ways are strange to us, as ours are to you; but you are sincere, and you are my friend. By what name shall I know you?"

"Call me Huron," I answered.

He raised his head and glanced over the assemblage. Then that wonderful voice rang out, low, clear, calm, sweet and strong, in the sweetest words I had ever heard.

"Let it be known," he said, "that this is Huron, the friend of Hualpa Capac." A murmur and a rustle swept through the long hall, and then all was still again. "Stand near me, my friend," he continued, motioning to a place by the high priest, "and witness the judgment of the Sun upon a guilty wretch, the judgment that would have fallen upon you had you proven unworthy."

I took the place indicated, but carried my turban in my hand. I dared not resume it where all save the Inca were uncovered. The white ranks of the soldiers swung forward and again they formed a barrier between the dais and the hall. By the same door through which I had entered the usher brought a young man who stepped coolly into the bright square of sunlight beneath the central opening. His bearing was firm but there was a gleam of something in his eyes that was either exultation or despair. Again the silence became oppressive, and I felt that once more they waited for some awful thing to happen.

CHAPTER VIII.

JUDGMENT.

THE young man stood quietly on the square of light and bore the scrutiny of the spectators without emotion. Finally the Inca addressed him:

"Son of Rehabat," he said, "you stand here a criminal where you have stood a guest. You have betrayed the trust of your Inca and brought disgrace and sorrow upon the house of your fathers. You know that it is the law that he who defiles a Virgin of the Sun shall die, he and all his house, and his goods shall be given to others, and not one vestige of his race remain in the land. What have you to say that shall stay this sentence from your head and from your father and your mother and all your house. Speak, and I will hear you."

Then the young man raised his head and spoke boldly. "My fathers for generations have served your fathers faithfully," he said. "They have kept the royal quipus, and taught their sons the

songs that carry history. I and my father are the last of our house, as you of yours, oh, Hualpa Capac. Let me therefore pray you that for this time the father may not suffer with the son. Had he known of my offense he would have slain me. He is blameless. With him will die the songs of the quipus. Let him live to teach them to some one who shall teach them to those who must follow us. For myself I ask nothing. Life has nothing more to give me. I have loved, and been beloved, and it is ended. Let me die. I would die twice if it would save her who must die for her love as I die for mine." His voice was firm and clear until it came to these last words. Then it faltered, and a spasm of pain swept over his face. I felt an intense sympathy for the poor fellow. I might have been insane enough to try to plead for him had there been time. But the end came in such a sudden and astounding manner that the astonishment and horror of it banished everything else from my thoughts.

"Your words are just," said the Inca. "As you have said, so let it be done."

Instantly there poured down through the opening where the culprit stood, a volume of light whose fierce, intolerable brilliance made me instinctively protect my eyes with my hand.

As it fell upon him the young man seemed actually to melt beneath it. He sank to the stones a shriveled heap, and the smoke and steam burst upward from his consuming body in a great cloud. He was destroyed as instantly as though a mass of melted iron had been poured over him. At the same instant the whole assembly fell to the earth and uttered incoherent prayers to their god who thus descended among them to avenge in person the defilement of his temple. Hualpa Capac and I were the only ones who stood erect. He turned upon me his solemn glance, but did not seem displeased that I showed no signs of fear.

In ten seconds it was all over. I saw the awful flash return up the light shaft as silently as it had fallen. The people still remained prostrate, but in a few moments they rose, one by one, and I could see that they were silently waiting for something more. It soon came. Four men clothed in black came into the hall and cast a black cloth over the remains, that still smoked and hissed with the heat. Presently they slowly raised the cloth, and when it was removed there was no sign left of the awful tragedy. I understood that the slab of stone was a revolving shutter that covered a vault beneath, into which the charred heap was precipitated by simply revers-

ing it. In a few minutes another culprit stood on the square of sunlight, and I began to brace myself to bear another sight of horror. This time it was a woman. She was young, and very good-looking for one of her race. She did not lift her eyes from the ground, and seemed utterly indifferent to her surroundings. The Inca spoke to her, and I thought there was less mercy in his tones than had sounded in them when he addressed the young man:

"You, whose name is henceforth nameless, whose name has been taken from every child who bore it, that you may be forgotten, you who have no name have still the right to say why you should not die for your crime. Lost bride of the sun, what have you to say?"

Slowly she raised her head, but instead of a plea for mercy she only asked a question.

"Is it true," she asked, "is he dead, he who left my sight but a moment ago so strong and handsome and fearless?" It was a wail, rather than a question. It seemed addressed to no one, but the Inca answered:

"The sun has consumed your lover," he said.

"Then there is nothing for me to say," the woman answered, speaking firmly and almost proudly. "I have loved, and that is life. It is ended, why should I not die? Why do you wait?"

Is not the strangler ready for his victim? Let me go to him. I will think his embrace is that of my lover, to whom he will send me." Then her head drooped again, and she said no more.

I saw the Inca hesitate a moment. He cast a puzzled look upon the woman, but she did not raise her head. He glanced toward the high priest by my side, but that official was sternly regarding the criminal. His eye caught mine for an instant only. Then, with an impatient gesture, he said to the woman: "As you have said, let it be done. Take her to the strangler."

The people now began to pass out through the doors opening into the stone hall, and I wondered if it was time for me also to go. Turning again to look at the Inca in hope of gaining some clew for my action, behold, he was gone. The rich curtain behind the dais was still agitated, showing which way he went. As every one seemed going his own way I did likewise. I crossed the stone hall, and found Quantal waiting for me by the entrance. He showed unmistakable pleasure at my appearance. If he had known how I am sure he would have given me a hearty handshake. As it was he merely bowed until his hand touched the earth, and then touched his forehead; but there was a heartiness in the gesture that I had not seen before.

Feeling fatigued I went into the *salon* and sat down on the couch from which Prince Anahuac had summoned me to the Hall of Judgment. Quantal stood before me again, and waited for me to speak.

"So you feared I would not stand the judgment of the sun?" I asked him, remembering the sorrowful look on his face when I had left him.

"I knew my lord was wise," he replied; "but I did not know how great. None but the Shining One, and his father the Sun, can look into the heart. Now that he has seen you, and called you his friend, there is no one who will dare to stand against you."

I guessed that he was thinking of the little prince, whose sudden animosity had been so evident. "Nevertheless, Quantal, I would rather have friends than enemies," I replied.

"My lord," answered Quantal, "you will not need for friends, now that the Inca has named you his friend. Rather will you be troubled to know whose friendship to accept. If I were not so humble I would beg you to accept mine, not only because you will be great and powerful, but because I was drawn to you when I expected you to meet a far different fate."

I looked earnestly in his face for a moment,

and was impressed by his evident sincerity. "You shall be my friend, curaca," I said; "and it may happen that we may be of use to each other. But tell me, what is this terrible punishment that poor woman is about to undergo. Is she to be strangled with a bowstring?"

"It would be merciful to her if that were so," replied Quantal; "but her death will be far more terrible than that, or than the wrath of the sun which you witnessed. Did you see how the Inca dreaded to pronounce it? I never before saw him hesitate at anything. But it is time we were going, for they will be there soon."

Now I had no desire to witness any more horrors, but I reflected that I must know all the strange customs of this strange land. So I ground my teeth together and followed him. He led me back to my own gallery and through a door at the northern end of it. As we passed he said: "I would not dare to take you here but for the name the Inca gave you—the Friend of Hualpa Capac."

The gallery was just like my own, but it was occupied by a throng of white-clad women, bearing spear and shield. In a low voice Quantal spoke to one who was evidently an officer.

"The Inca has requested his friend to remain in this wing of the palace," he said, "and unless you

will permit him to stand here he cannot witness the death of the lost bride of the sun. May I not crave it as a favor to him, and to myself?" he asked, with the courtly dignity that even the poorest Quichua can assume. The woman glanced at me coldly a moment. Then she uttered a word whose meaning I did not know, and the white ranks moved to the farther end of the gallery.

We followed at a little distance and halted above a small courtyard, not more than thirty feet square over whose soil grew with wonderful luxuriance a great twisting vine. It did not lift itself above the earth, but crawled and twisted riotously, as though seeking every grain of nourishment within its reach. Its leaves were sparsely distributed along the stem in pairs, and each was divided into five finger-like parts, each ending with a thorn stout enough to be discerned even at that distance, which was at least thirty feet. No other tree or plant grew among its dark foliage. It possessed the whole area. Suddenly a door in the wall of the opposite tower opened outward, swinging some fifteen feet above the vine-clad earth. In the opening stood the condemned woman, stripped naked. Behind her came a wall of spear-points, driven by Amazons. There was no time for waiting. She gave one

glance upward toward the roofs, whereon stood crowds of silent spectators, then with a shriek she sprang out, and landed on her feet among the vines. Then an awful thing happened. The snaky-looking vines began to stir and writhe. They lifted themselves in masses and rolled over each other toward the shrinking woman. They stood up around her. They twined themselves about her limbs and body like serpents. The sharp thorns tore her tender flesh, and the blood flowed freely. She wrestled in agony, and fell down. Before she could rise they had pinioned her. Soon she was buried, and only a heaving mass of writhing vines marked where the strangler devoured his prey.* I turned and looked at Quantal. He had hidden his face in his hands. I was glad to see it. It made me think better of him. I looked at the Amazons. They were gazing coldly at the vine and showed neither feeling nor interest.

* Such a carnivorous plant is said really to be found in that region.

CHAPTER IX.

HUALPA CAPAC.

THE show was over and the spectators began to disperse. Quantal preceded me to my quarters, and at my invitation entered and seated himself upon a divan in the inner room. Huanaro was there faithfully guarding my belongings. I told him to go out and take some exercise, but to confine his walk to our side of the courtyard. When we were alone I had a long conversation with the curaca. I told him I hoped to pass my days in Amam-Mayu Land, and that there were many things I ought to know about the people, the government, and the rulers, to keep from making mistakes. I asked him, therefore, to tell me the present situation of affairs at court.

Without hesitation he imparted much valuable information. I learned that Hualpa Capac was the last male member of the pure blood royal. He had a sister named Amaru, whom the people wished him to marry in order that the pure race of the Incas might continue, but Hualpa Capac

was averse to marriage, and continually procrastinated. The fears of the people were that he might die, and the Prince Anahuac, or his brother Capal, would then inherit the throne. When he mentioned the possibility of this the curaca sighed, and shook his head, but said no word of censure or objection. The nation, he said, worshiped Hualpa Capac, and he was the greatest, gentlest, strongest, most just and inflexible ruler they had ever had, so far as they could know by tradition. The territory over which he reigned was about eighty miles long by thirty wide. It was bounded and defended on one side by the river that gave it its name, the Amam-Mayu, or Great River, which here ran such a wild and tumultuous course, between such precipitous banks that in all the territory no man could keep a boat, or cross the raging stream. Its gorges were inaccessible, and its rapids impassable, so that only a light patrol was kept along its banks. To the eastward was a range of steep hills, which Indian scouts could indeed traverse, but only with great difficulty. At the north, and at the south, where I had entered, the territory was accessible only through narrow gorges, which had been walled for defense as has been described. The army of ten thousand men was distributed as follows. One regiment in the

palace, changed for another regiment every ten days. One at each wall. Two for patrol stations along the river, one in reserve at a post twenty miles north, and another at a post the same distance south of the palace, two patrolling the eastern range, and one on ten days' furlough. Every ten days there was a new allotment made by the Inca, and no one could tell what that allotment would be, except that the furlough came to the regiments in regular succession.

For two reigns no foe had attacked them, yet the army was kept up to its drill and work with the rigid discipline of war time. The Chunchos were the firm friends of the Inca, partly because he was a foe to the white men, and partly because he sent them many presents of food and clothing which they were too indolent or ignorant to provide for themselves. Besides, they had several times made war on the Incas, only to be repulsed, and had suffered for their usual donations until they had made good their reconciliation. They were very useful in two ways. They were an impassable barrier to the curiosity of the white man, and they formed a connecting link with the ancient empire of the Incas through which the people of Amam-Mayu Land kept up a slight knowledge of what was going on in the outer world. Every five years a summons was

sent to some Quichua Indian living near the frontier, to present himself at the City Without a Name. Experience had taught them that they could not disregard the summons and live within reach of the Chunchos. The very mystery of that summons terrified them into obedience. They brought the news of the doings of the white men, of the state of the country, of the wars in progress, the weapons used, etc., so that they were not so ignorant of the outside world as I had supposed. These messengers were incorporated into the provinces, given lands and wives, and soon lost all desire to return, especially as they knew it would be impossible to cross the territory of the Chunchos without a token. It had been about time to summon a new captive when the Chuncho chief sent a hasty messenger to say that a man wearing the costume of the Incas had camped near Chaupimayo, and sent a message to Hualpa Capac asking for a token. The whole court had been astonished and excited at this news, but the Bright One had not seemed surprised. He directed the token to be sent, saying:

"It may be good tidings he will bring us. In any event, he cannot depart without we will it so, and one man is not dangerous to Amam-Mayu Land. Let him come, and let him

bring one follower; for I would see what manner of men believe in this son of the Incas."

He told me that the female guards resided permanently in the palace. They were recruited from the ranks of the Virgins of the Sun, who were not married by the Incas or their relatives before they became too old to be attractive. That makes them savage," he said. "I would rather fight the Chunchos, any day, than the white regiment." They had exclusive care of the palace and the inner tower, and had more than once slain a visitor for some unconscious trespass. The northern half of the palace surrounding the Inca's tower was devoted to them in common with the Virgins of the Sun. The barracks were on my side, and the virgins on the other side of the tower. He said the tower was named the Dragon Tower, because somewhere in its depths was a golden chamber in which stood a golden dragon, in whose heart was kept always burning a sacred fire kindled by the sun. Terrible calamities would overtake the Inca and the nation if this fire ever became extinguished. It was fed with purest oil night and morning, and no hands but those of Hualpa Capac and his sister Amaru were sufficiently sacred to perform this high office. In olden times, when children of the royal race were plentiful, they took turns

in watching this sacred flame, and none were wearied. Now it required the constant presence of the Inca or his sister, for it must never be left alone. Hence they were never seen in public at the same time, one always being on guard in the Dragon Room.

These and many other useful pieces of information did Quantal give me as we sat in my chamber. Suddenly he paused in his talk and looked in surprise toward the door. I turned my gaze in that direction and saw a stunted little Indian not over four and a half feet high steadily regarding me. When he saw that I was looking at him he made a sign by placing his right hand first on his heart, then his forehead, then pointing it straight upward, and then beckoned me to follow him. "What do you want?" I asked, for I did not relish being disturbed.

"He can neither hear nor speak," interposed Quantal. "You must follow him. He comes from the Bright One. Oh, my lord, the sun of his favor shines brightly upon you. In all these years he has never called me, his faithful curaca, to a private interview. Do not forget your friend who is in the shadow."

There was no jealousy in this speech, only pure wonder. "Come to see me to-morrow," I said. I followed my dumb guide along the gal-

lery to the westward. We proceeded along the forbidden quarter to where a door led into the part of the palace devoted to the Virgins of the Sun. Though filled with surprise I followed on. The door was opened from within and I entered. Two Amazons guarded the portal, and a knot of them lounged a little way off, evidently for guard relief. A few steps farther along the mute turned to the right into a passage that led to the central tower. We soon entered it, and halted before another door guarded by the white-clad women. My guide motioned for me to wait, and entered the door. He soon returned and beckoned me to follow him. Passing through a small anteroom he ushered me into a stately chamber where, at the farther end, upon a couch of silken drapery reclined Hualpa Capac. At the upper end of the couch and in front of him was placed a large, heavy cushion, upon which lay a short, two-edged sword of bronze unsheathed. Behind his couch stood four of the female warriors, grim and motionless. My guide went and crouched at his feet with the evident intention of remaining there. I stood before the Inca, within a yard of his hand, and again we surveyed each other. I waited for him to speak, which he seemed in no haste to do. Once he opened his lips, hesitated, then closed them and was silent. At last he said:

"Your name is Huron. That has a pleasant sound. Your manner is bold, yet gentle. I know that you are brave, or you would never have dared to cross the wilderness. I know that you are strong, for with your own hand alone you slew a great jaguar, the terror of the Chunchos. His skin is even now being prepared for your couch. Knowing this much I would know more. Lay that sword upon the floor and sit before me while you tell me of your race and country."

I took the sword from the cushion and seated myself before him. "What shall I tell you, O Bright One?" I asked.

"Tell me first of yourself, of your people, of your rank, and whom you serve in your country. Surely there cannot be many above you, or the race must be more like gods than like men."

"I serve no man," I said, "save of my own free will. There are none so high above me that it is not lawful for me to ask my people to put me in their place, and if they refuse me it will not be because my rank does not entitle me, but because they deem some other more fitting for the place. My people are as the blades of grass in number, and all are free to go and to do as they please, so that they break no law and wrong no other."

"Are your people indeed so many?" he asked.

"How many men does Quantal command?" I inquired.

"A thousand."

"Then, oh, Inca, if you had fifty thousand Quantals, and gave each one a thousand men that would still be less than the number of my people."

"That is a great number," he exclaimed. He cast down his eyes for a moment. Then raising them he continued: "It is too many to think of. What do they do? What is their work? and their play, and what is it all for?"

"Their work is to get much gold. Their play is to enjoy what it will buy. Their final object they do not know. Some say it is to do good to others; some, to provide for their children; some, to make their country great and strong; some, to learn all that can be known about the world we live in, the things it contains, and the sun and moon and stars around us; in fact no two agree upon what it is all for." There followed a long silence, during which he gazed at me curiously. Finally he asked:

"Do you love gold?"

"I like many of the things it buys," I answered, "and therefore I like to have it."

"Did you hear that there was much gold here?"

"Yes. The stories of the gold here were too wonderful to be believed."

"Were those tales the cause of your coming?"

"The cause, yes. They first made me think of the journey. Afterward I would have come had I known there was none." He looked at me in silence for a little while. Finally he said:

"Well, you have come and you shall not be disappointed. The gold is here." He made a sign to the mute, who instantly stood before him. A few more rapid signs were exchanged, and then he said to me: "Follow Misti, and when you have seen, return with him."

Without a word I followed the dwarf from the room. We went up a dark, narrow stair and entered a room which I judged must be in the top part of the tower. It was a treasure room. There in piles lay bars of gold, cups and vessels of gold, richly chased and carved, images, flowers, birds, animals, insects, all manner of skillful craftsmanship in beaten, molten and carven gold. There were plates, and wires, and rude nuggets, and vessels full of the yellow dust. The value of the treasure was vast, running into millions of dollars. Once the sight would have excited me, but at that moment I felt a strange lack of interest. Some of the art works arrested my attention, and I remember admiring the re-

flection of the light from some of the loopholes; but avarice was dead in my breast. By some strange instinct I anticipated what was to follow, and my heart was heavy with a regret that surprised me. When I had looked well through the treasure I signed to the mute that I was ready. Then he beckoned me to look into a chest he had opened, and there, a glittering show, was a heap of rubies and emeralds and diamonds, uncut but beautiful. I gazed at them a moment, nodded my head and turned away. Then we returned to the Inca. He motioned for me to resume my seat.

"The friend of Hualpa Capac shall not go away empty-handed," he said. "You should rest with us for a season. Then you shall have a safe return with all the treasure you and your servant can carry. Is the friend of the Inca content?"

There was a long silence, during which a thousand thoughts flashed through my mind. Was this royal tiger playing with me? Or was it true that I was free to return, with all the wealth I desired? How easy it would be to let me go a little way, and then send his Chunchos to destroy me. But why let me go at all? And he did not look like one whose word was not to be trusted. I looked up suddenly. He was regarding me fixedly, and there was no mistaking

the sadness in his gaze. Suddenly the thought of the loneliness of this being flashed across my mind. He was so far above his people that none dared to approach him. He was without wife, or children, and had no friend, though many adorers. But why should I care for that? Yet I realized that I did care. Had this man bewitched me? As I sat thus stupidly silent, knowing not what to say, he spoke again.

"Is it not enough? Can I do anything more? I will give you some of the bright stones also, and I have heard they are often exchanged for much gold in the western lands. Can Hualpa Capac do more for his friend than fulfill his heart's desire, and send him home to his people with much riches?"

Forgetful of propriety I rose and crossed the room in my confusion. Then I returned and knelt by his side. "You offer me more than I dreamed of gaining," I cried, "and I ought to take it and go. But though I have seen you but an hour I do not wish to leave you. Know you not that man is sometimes led to do great deeds by a motive too small to be remembered? Thus have I been led, first by a desire for gain, until now I have seen you, and the gold has become of no account. What have you done to me that I cannot bear the thought of leaving you?"

I will go if you bid me, but it must be as poor as I came; for now I know that something greater than avarice has drawn me, and I will not barter it for gold or gems. I will carry nothing back with me but the memory that Hualpa Capac called me friend. That is worth more than gold to me now. But I entreat you not to send me away, but to let me be somewhere near to you, so that sometimes I may see you, and speak with you as I am speaking now. I ask for nothing more. Nothing. That is reward enough. You have given me your friendship and I ask for nothing else."

My voice was so tremulous with earnestness that I was ashamed of it, and ceased speaking.

The Inca rose to his feet and stood over me in silence. Once he raised his hand as though to make a signal, and the Amazons lowered their spears, but he waved them back.

Then he put out his hand until his fingers touched my hair, but he quickly drew them back. "Stand," he said, in a low voice. I obeyed. We stood face to face, close together. There was a look of softness and sadness in the eyes where I had seen the tigerish gleam a few hours ago. He looked at me dreamily. "You are taller than I," he said presently, much to my surprise. I made no answer. "You are not

so wise as I thought," he said at last. "The wise man, when he gains his point, takes no further risk."

"No," I said, "I am not wise. It was not my wisdom that brought me here, nor will it keep me here, nor take me safely away. I thought I came from an impulse. I now believe it was something greater than any impulse. The same cause makes me pray you to let me stay with you, O Bright One, to be a friend, and serve you with heart and mind, and life itself if needed."

"I think you must be mad, Huron, to ask it; and I know I am not wise to listen; but there is no need for haste. We will talk again of this matter. There are other things, too, of which I would inquire. You have much to tell me ere I let you go. Sit here beside me while we talk." He sank upon his couch and I obeyed him, feeling as confused and awkward as though he had been the president himself.

After a short pause he said: "Huron, my friend of a day, in the land you left whom did you leave to hope for your return?"

"Bright One," I answered, "in all that crowded land there is not one to whom I am united by any tie of love or kindred."

"How can that be true?" he asked. "Surely

your face is good, and your speech is pleasant, and you are strong and brave. Why are you alone, among so many?"

"In my youth my parents died," I replied. "I was reared in a place where young men see none but teachers, and care for naught but study. When I left them I went into the wilderness to measure its miles for the building of great roads of metal. Then I came to Peru, to help make more of them. When they were finished I came to you. I have had no time for pleasure, or for love; and I have no near kindred to care for or to seek."

"Have you no wife, no children? Is there no fair woman of your people to whom you have spoken words that should cause her to look for your return? Are you not a man? Have you never loved?"

"I have never loved, O Bright One, and women have had no charms for me. I care not for charms that are for sale, and I have had no time to look for others. Yet it is always pleasant to see them, and I love to hear them laugh and chatter."

"Huron, is there really any such thing as love; or is it only like the longing of a brute, whom any mate will satisfy?"

"I cannot tell you, Inca; but I believe that as

men differ so differ their loves. Some there may be whom any mate will satisfy. Some there are who never meet a mate, and die solitary. In either case, when once it is love, the man is better for it. Even if his love is an unholy one, like that of the poor fellow who died to-day, he is the better for it, if it is really love." The Inca raised himself from his reclining position with a new air of animation.

"Did you hear what he said," he exclaimed, "that he would die twice if it would save her?"

"I heard, O Bright One."

"And the woman; the guilty wretch who had violated her sacred vows, and degraded a Virgin of the Sun to the bed of a mere Quichua; did you note that she did not fear death, but only longed for it to take her to her lover? What strange madness possessed them?"

"Ah, my Inca," I exclaimed, "I pray that some day you may know the madness without the pain."

He looked at me curiously.

"And you have never known it?" he said.

"Never. But I have seen the miracle in others, and I know that it is good; for it makes rude men gentle, strong men considerate, and timid men brave to defend their loved ones, or die for them if need be." At this moment the

them passing the corridor, looking very humble and ashamed. As I stood on the gallery watching them the door at the farther end opened and a file of the Amazons came out. They came to my door and two were stationed there. As I passed in between them they lifted their spears high in salute.

CHAPTER X.

AMARU.*

I THANKED Quantal for his ready compliance with my request. "I hope I did not interfere with any of your duties by sending for you," I said.

"I was on my way here when I met your messenger," he replied. "I have just received orders to say to you that you are free to pass all guards save those in the northwest quarter, which is the abode of the Virgins of the Sun. Curacas in charge of the palace are to supply you with bearers and guards when you wish to go abroad. You are to be notified of the first and second words every night, which all sentries will recognize excepting those at the doors of the Virgins. And I am to conduct you to the roof of the palace to witness the ceremonies of the Setting Sun."

"It must be near the hour," I said.

"It will soon be time to go," he answered. "But here is Misti again." The mute entered,

* Am-ah'-roo, Quichua word meaning a serpent.

bearing a package. He placed it on a couch and proceeded to unfold it. It contained a beautiful costume of scarlet tunic, trimmed and embroidered with gold, a sash of scarlet, blue and gold; leggings of light blue trimmed with gold fringe, and a pair of beautiful sandals with silver straps.

It was a facsimile of the costume worn by the Inca, save that no turban was with it. In place thereof was a scarlet band fringed with gold, but having no crimson ball depending from it. Above the center, in front, was a large, five-pointed star of gold. The mute touched his right hand to his heart, his forehead, and then pointed upward. This I had learned to know was his description of the Inca. Then he pointed to the costume, and then to me. His meaning was unmistakable. I was to wear it. I glanced at Quantal. His expression was that of one who is past being surprised at anything.

"What is it?" I asked of him with my eyes.

"My lord, it is the costume of a prince of *the pure blood*. Since Hualpa Capac became Inca there has been none in Amam-Mayu Land who could wear it."

"Then it shall make its appearance again," said I with an elation that was intoxicating. "But these little sandals are too small for my big feet."

"The feet of my lord are big and strong, the feet of a warrior," said the curaca. "I will have the straps sewed to larger sandals."

He motioned to Huanaro to take them up and follow him. While they were gone I exchanged my garments for the new ones. They were not a perfect fit. The tunic was rather too full in the breast and rather tight in the back, while the leggings were rather short. By the time I was ready Quantal and Huanaro returned with the sandals. This time they were large enough, and I soon had them in place. I felt quite ashamed of my big, bony feet, they were so much larger than those of the Indians, but was comforted when Quantal exclaimed: "What big, strong feet you have. You must be very strong;" and I saw it was meant for praise.

Then we set out for the palace roof. We went up a flight of steps at the western end of my gallery and proceeded toward the quarters of the Virgins. The only barrier between us and them was a wall of the female guards, standing cold and motionless before us. There were but two ranks of them, and beyond them could be seen distinctly the nuns of the Incas. Most of them were quite pretty, and all were young. We stood in the midst of quite a throng of spectators, but I fancied that several demure glances I

detected on the part of the Virgins were shot very accurately at me and my fine clothes. They were not alone in their observation. I noticed many who looked first at me and then at each other.

As the sun touched the verge there was a slight movement among the Virgins. Then there stepped to the front of their ranks a tall, straight, slender woman, clothed in snowy white garments embroidered in gold with images of the sun, and of a great serpent which were readily distinguished at that short distance. I recognized a strong likeness to Hualpa Capac in her features, and knew it must be Amaru, chief Virgin of the Sun, next to the Inca the holiest, most sacred person in the empire. Her hair was drawn back from ear and forehead, and confined by a band of gold and scarlet much like that upon my own head, except that it bore no star. She stood in an easy attitude a little in front of her Virgins, her hands hanging listlessly by her side. She gazed, with eyes as undazzled as an eagle's, at her declining god. Never before had I seen such calm strength and grace and dignity and womanly sweetness combined in one personality. Like all the rest she was silent and motionless, her whole being absorbed in reverently bidding her deity good-night. Conscious

of my indecorum I turned my face toward the west. In those latitudes the sun goes down with a plunge when once he touches the horizon, and just as I looked the red rim disappeared. Instantly the Virgins sang a brief chant. It was only a few words, but sounded very clear and sweet. Then all the people and the Virgins and the soldiers raised their hands with the palms to the west. Then they clapped them twice, and so many were they that the noise was like the rending of many strong timbers.

The ceremony was ended and the crowd began to disperse. I had turned to steal one more glance at her, and as I did so our eyes met. Her survey was cool and critical, and lasted longer than I cared to meet it. When I looked up again she was gone. As I followed Quantal to my apartments I felt fascinated by, but fearful of, that cold, proud, critical, sweet face that had shone on me for one brief minute.

"Tell me about her," I said to the curaca.

"It is not wholesome to speak of the priestess," he replied, and I saw that he cast a suspicious glance around him, as though afraid of the very walls. I sympathized with his sensations.

"I would very much dislike to incur her enmity," I said, "but I would like to know more about her."

"She is the twin sister of Hualpa Capaca, and will marry him some day. That is all there is to tell," said the curaca, evidently wishing to avoid the subject.

"But why then is it unwholesome to speak of the priestess?" I asked.

"My lord, I know nothing of the matter except what I have heard. It is rumored that when one ventures to look too long upon her in public, some misfortune soon befalls him; and if the circumstance be too often mentioned more trouble results to those who note it. Probably it is all imagination. I know not."

"But how could she learn of such speeches?"

"Who can tell. She is a priestess, and much knowledge is hers that is not known to others."

"Does she ever leave the palace?"

"Yes. Sometimes she is borne about the city."

"Does the Inca ever accompany her?"

"They have never been seen together, and he has never been heard to pronounce her name. Some there are who think he fears her, even as many of the people fear her."

"Well, at all events she is the most wonderful woman I have ever seen, and her name, the Serpent, seems to fit her wonderfully."

"Yes," said the curaca. "She is strong and beautiful and swift and graceful and deadly."

The name suits well. But she is the right woman for the Inca's bride, who shall rear warriors to lead her people when the hour of vengeance comes."

"What hour is that, Quantal?"

"You must know, friend of the Bright One, that it has been believed from ancient times, by the people of Amam-Mayu Land, that when the time was ripe a star from the East should wed a serpent from the river; and she shall bear a son whose name will be Python. And he will lead the people to the westward and sweep the white man into the great waters. Then will return the power of the Incas to their ancient capital, and they shall reign there till the waters cover the mountains."

"And do the people still look for this star from the East?"

"They do. It is a part of our religion. Any day it may appear, and many look for it now, because of her."

I am not superstitious, but I felt a thrill of awe as I thought of that tall, dark, lovely woman, with her serpent grace and somber eyes. At this moment servants appeared with supper. Quantal whispered in my ear the password for the ensuing night and day, and departed.

That night I lay long upon my couch before I

could sleep. Many thoughts came thronging my brain, many problems demanded solution. The most urgent of all, and the most inexplicable, was the sudden fancy the Inca had taken to me, an utter stranger, of another race and people. It was like the fancy of a girl, I thought, and would probably last no longer than a girl's.

I was a little apprehensive of the effect this sudden show of favoritism might have upon the people who surrounded him. I knew the will of the Inca was the supreme law of the land, but I felt that there must be around him many hearts that burned with resentment at the preferment of a stranger rather than one of their own people. Yet I could dimly guess that it might possibly be wiser for him to select a friend like me, who had no following, and whose elevation would not have to be succeeded by the promotion of a string of kindred. "No civilized potentate would dare to be guilty of such a precipitate attachment," I thought. But absolute, unquestioned power through a lifetime would naturally lead to results different from those I was used to. At any rate, he was sincere. I would stake my life on that, literally. He should find me true to his friendship. And as for precipitancy, did I not see that I was guilty of the same folly? Had I not refused to take my profit and go in

safety, just because I did not want to leave this stranger? Surely I had known him no longer than he had known me, yet I could not bear the thought of leaving him. It looked like witchcraft, and I could not understand it; but I could feel it, and there was no room for doubt that I did feel it. At last I fell asleep, and troubled dreams pursued me until morning.

CHAPTER XI.

A COMPACT.

It seemed to be a part of Quantal's business to see that I wanted for nothing. Soon after breakfast he craved admission, and I bade Huanaro lead him in. He glanced in evident approval at the handsome costume given me by the Inca. I asked him if it was proper for me to wear it every day, or to reserve it for special occasions.

"It is always a special occasion when the friend of Hualpa Capac is present," he replied. After a few unimportant words he begged permission to ask me a question. Of course I consented. "My lord," he said, "when you stood before the Sun yesterday you spoke some words that have caused me to wonder. You said that you came from the land where the sun was shining while yet we slept and waited for the dawn."

"Yes, cuaraca, that is what I said."

"And is it there that he reposes during the night time?"

"Not all of the night, Quantal; but he always is with us before he visits you."

"And does my lord know the mystery of his coming and of his going? Can he tell why sometimes he suddenly hides his face at midday, when the fowls think it is night and fly up to the trees?"

"Yes, Quantal; and my people can tell when that strange hiding is to come to pass. Wait a moment." I took the almanac I had brought with me and looked for eclipses. Unfortunately none were announced for any near time. "There will not be any such hiding for a long time," I said.

The chief sat gazing solemnly in my face, but asked no more questions. Presently I began to question him. "Curaca," I said, "you tell me that the priestess is destined to marry Hualpa Capac. Suppose he were to die. What then would be her fate?"

"She would then have to marry the prince Anahuac, who led you to the place of judgment, or the Prince Capal, his brother."

"What! Not that—" and I did not finish the sentence.

"Yes," he said, with evident disgust. "And then, my lord, remember that you are a friend to Quantal."

I laughed softly, and looked him squarely in the eyes. "I would probably be equally glad to remind you of the fact," I said.

"Perhaps," was the quiet reply. We looked steadily into each other's faces, and there was no need of further words. We understood each other.

"How many of the curacas are your friends?" I asked in a low voice.

"Four of them are my friends and they love the Bright One."

"Then are they my friends also!" I exclaimed so earnestly that he glanced uneasily toward the distant figures of the white-clad Amazons at my door. "Are they to be trusted?" I asked, indicating them with a gesture.

"Who can say when women are to be trusted?" he answered. "As long as they are faithful they are so to the death. But a whim, a word, a spasm of jealousy can transform them from friends to foes in an instant. Then no treachery is too base, no evil too great to compass the measure of their hatred. So long as the Inca remains unmarried they will serve him faithfully. When he makes his choice the others will hate him, and these old dragons will go with them."

"But I thought he was to marry the priestess, Amaru."

"Of course. I did not refer to her. They will not be jealous of her. She is too far above them. It is of his other wives I speak."

"Perhaps he will take no other wives," I said.

"Truly he has shown no inclination to any," he replied with a smile.

"When does your term of service in the palace end?" I asked.

"I have five more days to serve."

"Give me the names of the curacas who are your friends."

"That is wise. They are Andoval, of the first thousand; Reca, of the third; Nesel, of the fourth; and Laval, of the seventh."

"Which is your thousand, Quantal?"

"The fifth."

"These are your friends," I said. "Are the other five your enemies?"

"No. I only mean that we have never been on intimate terms. I do not know whether they are the friends of Anahuac and Capal or not."

"When they are on duty here I will try to learn," I said.

"My lord is wise, and will not let them learn anything from him."

"I will try to keep my counsel, curaca," I said. "Now let us counsel further. In case of

a danger to you and to me from this Anahuac, a danger too great to oppose, what would there be left for us to do?"

"There would be but one hope; to retreat to the west by way of the Hall of Ice."

"And what is this Hall of Ice?"

"It is the tomb of the Incas. There they sit in the darkness and cold, to sleep until the Python comes. Then they will receive new life, and enjoy their old estates."

"In which direction does it lie?"

"It is far to the west and south. A swift warrior will travel thither in ten days."

"Is the road open?"

"Yes, save for the Chunchos."

"I hope the necessity will never arrive," I said. "So long as the Bright One lives I fear no evil."

"Neither do I, O Huron. But it is a weak bow that has but one arrow."

"Are the two mutes trustworthy?"

"In anything that affects the welfare of Hualpa Capac and his sister they are as solid as the palace walls."

"That is good," I said. "They are so near him that they are like faithful dogs that one never catches asleep."

"Yes," replied Quantal. "But if ever danger

threatens the Inca it will not be in the palace, but when he is at the corn planting."

"Tell me about it, curaca."

"Every year, at the beginning of winter and the beginning of summer he is borne from the palace through the surrounding provinces. In each province he enters a field, sows some grain, and plows a furrow. One regiment accompanies him to guard him. If it should so chance that those who love Anahuac better than Hualpa Capac could manage to control the regiment that guards him, and at the same time control the regiment that holds the palace, you can see how evil would be his plight."

"I can see. And if our Great Father wills it I will be a sword to defend him and a shield to guard him. His life shall be my life, and with his death will I die."

"Nay, friend of the Inca, you say too much. Say rather that if he finds a foe you will live to punish his enemy."

"Yes, that is better. If any foe attacks him he has Huron to reckon with. And now, curaca, let me tell you how I can serve you in time of need. Before a foe can reach him or me I can slay him, as I slew the jaguar. His bow and spear will be useless, for he will die before he can use them."

"That is good; but the Quichuas are hard fighters when they do fight. How many could you thus destroy if they continued to charge?"

"By myself only six or eight. But if a wall of spears and shields delayed them, many more."

"That is good. You are a soldier," he said.

At this moment an usher came with a message to the effect that the Princes Anahuac and Capal were in the great drawing-room and would be glad to see me. They called it the Hall of Waiting. I bade adieu to Quantal and followed the usher. I found them in the hall wherein I had waited for my summons to the Hall of Judgment. They were reclining upon divans when I entered and did not rise. I went straight toward them and when within a few feet I paused and spoke to Anahuac.

"I thank you, prince, for the pleasant introduction you gave me yesterday," I said. He looked at me sullenly, and then looked at his brother.

Capal was, if possible, more puny and weak-looking than Anahuac. Both were undersized, with thin chests, legs like broomsticks, small black eyes close together, and foreheads that were so retreating that they seemed like the productions of some mechanical compression rather than of nature. It was evidently agreed that

Capal should do the talking. He began by saying that he had come to see the friend his cousin, the Inca, was pleased to honor. I interrupted him with the remark that I preferred to sit while I listened. I suspected they had purposely neglected either to rise, or to invite me to sit. Quite a number of people were in the room, and though they were too polite to intrude, yet I could see that no movement of ours escaped their notice. I was determined that I would tolerate no assumption of superiority in any one but the Inca, or, perhaps, in his sister. I seated myself at a little distance, and motioned him to proceed. Their faces darkened with anger, and for a moment they were silent. Then Capal continued: "Hualpa Capac is fortunate in securing a new friend of such a fine appearance and good manners."

I almost respected the rascal for the neatness of his sarcasm.

"Yes," I said, "any man was fortunate who secured a faithful friend. As for the fine appearance and good manners, I could hardly fail to look well in the costume prescribed by the Inca; and my manners must surely be correct, for they were, for the moment, modeled after those of the two illustrious princes before me."

Then there was another silence. The next to

speak was Anahuac. He asked a curious question: "What does the sun do while he is resting in that land beyond the dawn, whence you say you came?"

"He shines on a great people."

"What lies beyond your people, stranger?"

"A great water, Anahuac, like that which lies west of your old Peru."

They looked at each other when I said this, and it seemed to me that they were disappointed. I reflected that the Quichuas believed the ocean was the end of the world, and wondered if that was not the source of their disappointment.

"How did you find your way here?" asked Capal.

"The sun guided me." Again they looked darkly at each other. Then there was a long silence. I felt my animosity growing against them, and wondered why they had sent for me. All at once I guessed that it must have been at the command of the Inca. Then I rose to go, for I felt that I owed them no courtesy. As I passed them I said:

"You have obeyed your orders, and I will not keep you longer." I saw by their sheepish look of surprise that I had hit the mark. I went back to my apartments.

"Has any one been to see me?" I asked of

Huanaro. No one had called, and I felt disappointed. I waited all day, but the call did not come. Evidently the Inca did not wish to see me. Quantal came at sunset, and together we watched the ceremony on the roofs. Again I saw the priestess, calm, distant, unapproachable. This time she did not look at me. I knew she did not. I should have felt her glance. She had forgotten my existence. I went back to my quarters in a bad humor. Huanaro was absent, and I told the curaca of my interview with the princes. He begged me to repeat every word. He smiled at first, and then became grave. When I had finished he said:

“And is it true that your people live by the great water on the other side?”

“It is.”

“I am glad you told them. They will not exult over their interview. My lord is too wise for them to take him unawares.”

“But what difference can it make, curaca, that my people live by the great waters on the other side of the land?”

“Do not ask me now, oh, friend of Hualpa Capac. The matter is a great one, I begin to believe. Ask me not now, however. When it is good for you to know I will tell you. But make now a compact with me. Let it be that you,

Huron, and I, Quantal, pledge to each other our utmost help in every need; and that no other shall come before the heart of either to shadow the other, saving only Hualpa Capac."

"I join you in that pledge, Quantal, only the name of Amaru must be joined to that of Hualpa Capac, for the destiny of the empire depends, according to your traditions and laws, as much upon her as upon him."

"Let it be so, oh, Huron. For Hualpa Capac and the priestess first, and then for our own protection, is this compact sealed." He drew a short dagger from his girdle and wounded himself slightly on the arm. Then he handed it to me, and I imitated his action. Then he took some of my blood and mingled it with his, and I took some of his and mingled it with mine. And thus I made a kinsman, the only one I had in the world, so far as I knew.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BANQUET.

THE Quichuas eat but twice a day, just after sunrise, and after sunset. After breakfast the next morning I sent Huanaro to the curaca with a request for a litter to take me through the city. In a short time he returned to say that it was ready. I proceeded to the outer court to enter it and felt a little abashed to see that a captain, with his full quota of one hundred men had been detailed to escort me on my little journey.

The captain asked me where I would be pleased to go. I told him I wished to see the points of interest in the city. After a moment's hesitation he gave an order and we began our march. I was borne across the parade outside the gates, and through a street leading to the east. We soon reached an adobe building, constructed with open sides, in whose long interior I perceived rows upon rows of tables loaded with fruits, fish, meats, vegetables, sacks of meal or grain, and every edible used by the people. Many of them

were there providing for their households, and I had a curiosity to witness their trading. Everything was so quiet, the transactions were so quickly and silently accomplished that I wondered what system of prices could be so satisfactory that no bargaining was necessary. I dismounted from my litter and walked through the building. My presence interfered with my design, for everyone ceased from his occupation to stare at me. Finally I told the captain to request them to proceed with their business, and he did so in polite but firm language. Then I saw how it was done. It was not a matter of purchase at all. The people there were mostly servants, purveying for their masters. As they approached a certain table they each presented a symbol of a number. On a tablet behind the table was a column of similar symbols.

The attendant would glance at the symbol presented by the servant, then at the tablet, and without a word being spoken by either, would proceed to weigh or measure out certain quantities of his commodities and deliver them into the waiting basket. No coin, or paper, or other token of payment was passed, and so far as I could see, no equivalent for bookkeeping was in evidence, except that opposite each symbol on the tablet was a small hole into which a peg was

thrust when the basket was supplied. I noticed that different symbols were at different tables, and it did not take long to discover that the whole affair was merely a matter of distribution. They were drawing rations. When we had gone through this commissary establishment the captain conducted me to another building where there were not so many people. They were receiving portions of different kinds of cloth. As before it was served a number was presented, I concluded that this was also a matter of distribution, and not of sale.

During the morning I was conducted to places where stonecutters were polishing slabs and blocks of stone; to potteries where earthenware and earthen pipes of various sizes were moulded and burned; to a slaughter house where pigs, and goats, and sheep, were being killed, dressed, and sent out to places of distribution; and nowhere did I see any sign of anything to take the place of money. Toward noon the heat became oppressive, and I was borne to the palace, where after a cool bath I felt refreshed and invigorated. It was late in the afternoon before Quantal called at my door. He inquired how I had enjoyed my little excursion through the city, and I, in my turn, had many questions to ask him. I learned, to my

astonishment, that the idea of purchase and sale was unknown to the inhabitants of this City Without a Name. Nothing was ever bought or sold. It was rare even for an exchange of any kind to occur. Each citizen was entitled to a certain share in the products of the entire state, which share was determined, not by the amount produced, but by his own necessities. Every citizen was required to be either a producer of something or a servant of the Inca's court. There was not an idler in the city. I could not make Quantal understand what I meant by money. When he did begin to dimly comprehend the significance of the golden coin I showed him, he simply said:

"We could do nothing with it here. No man has anything to exchange for gold if he had it, and all the gold belongs to the Inca. It makes ornaments for the palace and the temple, but one would be silly to give his food or clothing for it. One cannot eat it, and though he can wear some of it on his clothing he would be poorly dressed if he had nothing else."

That night we again participated in the ceremony of the Setting Sun. As we turned to leave the roofs my glance sought the face of the priestess. She did not look toward me, but with downcast eyes walked slowly through her ranks

of nuns to the door of her tower. When we had reached my room Quantal said to me:

"My lord, I note that your eyes seek the face of the priestess. Do not forget what I told you of the evil that falls upon those who gaze too long upon her. Yet I do not wish to advise you. You are different from any other who has ever cast his eyes upon our city and perhaps you are safe, even from the wrath of the priestess."

"There is no danger, curaca. She does not know that I exist. Since the brief glance she gave me the first time we visited the roofs together she has never looked toward where we stood."

"My lord," he answered gravely, "do not be misled. She knows that you are there; and every time your look has been fastened upon her face she has known it well."

"So be it," I answered. "I fear her not; and I will be a friend to her and to every friend of hers, so long as I live in Amam-Mayu Land." At this moment Misti appeared, and my heart gave a bound. Had the Inca sent for me to visit him? The mute made some signs to Quantal, who returned them. Then he said to me:

"The Inca invites you to sup at his table to-night. What shall I say?"

"Say that his invitation is a command which I shall joyfully obey." As the mute retired Quantal said:

"I could not say exactly your words, but the mute understands well enough your meaning."

"Where will this table be spread?" I asked.

"In the hall over the Hall of Waiting," he answered.

"And at what hour will it be proper to present myself?"

"In about two hours from this time," replied Quantal. "I shall also be there, and will come for you to show you the way."

It was a banquet to which he conducted me. The long hall was divided into two rooms by magnificent *portières* of silk and gold, which hung in heavy folds that were drawn back to disclose the inner division of the room. This inner division was not more than a fourth as long as the outer part of the room, the *portière* being much nearer one end of the hall than the other. In the smaller room no one was visible; but in the outer room was quite a throng of people. All were standing, or walking about. There were long couches, or divans, all along the sides of the room, but no one was sitting on them. At the farther end of the inner room

I could see a low stage, or platform, only one step high, on which was another divan covered with a gorgeous robe. I wondered where all the silk came from, and I may as well say now that I learned it was not produced by silkworms, but was the product of a tree called the silk tree. Quantal stationed me near the dividing *portière* and stood near me. No one spoke to us, and if any one felt any curiosity about me it was concealed. In a few minutes there was a sudden stir among the guests. They arranged themselves in two lines down the room, leaving an open passageway between them. The cause was immediately apparent. The Inca had entered the smaller room and was coming into the larger one. As he passed the spot where I was standing he appeared not to notice me, but turned his attention entirely to those standing on the other side. He passed slowly along that line, stopping now and then to speak a word to one and another. Everyone thus addressed left his station and followed the Bright One in his progress. When he had reached the end of the hall he crossed over and returned along the line in which I stood, speaking occasionally to a guest as he had done on the other side. To my annoyance I noticed that he was quite gracious to Anahuac and Capal, stopping before each to

say several words. No one ventured to reply, but with a bow each followed him as he proceeded. I judged that he thus invited one out of every five or six. When he reached the spot where Quantal and I were standing he addressed the curaca, saying: "You are looking well to-night, curaca. I have some of that yellow wine you praised so last year. You must not neglect it."

When he came to me he stopped and gave me a most cordial greeting, though he did not smile. "I am glad to welcome you to my table, my friend," he said, in a voice purposely made audible throughout the room. "Sit near me, to-night, that I may see that your wants are well supplied. It is not often that Hualpa Capac has the pleasure of entertaining one of your exalted rank, especially a visitor from the land of the morning star. Perhaps you do not know that it is prophesied that great things are to come to our land from yours." Imitating the example of the others I bowed in silence, and followed close behind him. He mounted the little dais and reclined upon his divan. Then he motioned to me to seat myself on a lower one at his right. Anahuac and Capal were seated on his left. Then the rest of the company disposed of itself, each according to his own wishes. I saw them

selecting each other for table companions without much ceremony. Presently servants entered with the small tables now grown familiar to me, and placed one before the Inca and each of his guests.

I will not fatigue you with a description of the banquet. It was a good supper, well served in courses, and the dishes were of solid gold. The greatest drawback was the absence of knives and forks and spoons. The fingers, and slices of hard-baked bread had to serve every purpose. After supper the dishes and food were removed, servants brought round small towels and a basin of water, into which every man dipped his towel and then used it to cleanse his hands and face. Many of them needed it badly enough. The two princes particularly excited my disgust by the bestial way in which they gorged themselves and spread the grease and crumbs over their faces. I did not wonder at their puny looks. The marvel was that they did not die of indigestion. During the meal no one spoke to any other, and it was soon ended. Then began what promised to be the real business of the evening. On every table the servants placed three drinking vessels of liberal size. Then they brought in great jars of liquids, which they proceeded to distribute. I

suppose my portion was the same as those of the other guests. The largest cup was filled with chicha, and it spoiled my enjoyment to have the vile stuff so near to me. I wondered if Hualpa Capac could possibly be guilty of swallowing it, and secretly noted the cup into which his servant, Misti, poured it. I was gratified to see that he did not once raise it from the table. Indeed, though he often raised a winecup to his lips, it was not once replenished, and I had an opportunity to observe that it was nearly full when he retired. Conversation now became general. It was carried on in low tones, only two or three talking to each other. The Inca took a small golden cup from his table, touched it to his lips, and handed it to a servant standing near, at the same time pronouncing a name. The servant handed it to a large, heavy-looking man dressed in a costume in which the color of blue predominated. Round his neck he wore a peculiar collar of knotted and woven cords. He approached the dais, bearing in his hand the small cup which had been kissed by the Inca, and sank upon his knees before him. The Inca lifted his own cup and took a sip, looking pleasantly at the old man all the time. He in his turn raised his cup and drained it, handing it to the waiting servant. He did not rise, and the

Inca said something to him in a low tone. The man prostrated himself a moment, then regained his feet, speaking a few rapid words in a low tone. I could not tell what he said, but he seemed very much affected, and I noticed that the little scene had attracted general attention.

The same courteous ceremony was repeated several times. Quantal was not forgotten, and the two princes, who had not failed to gulp down their chicha, were also honored. At last he sent the cup to me, and I imitated the behavior of my neighbors. The Inca did not raise his cup to his mouth at once, but leaning forward said in a low voice, "Retire soon, and wait." Then, speaking more loudly he said: "Stand, Huron, my friend. One of your race and rank needs kneel to no one."

Then, turning to the assembly, "Let all men do honor to Huron, the friend of Hualpa Capac. I have inquired searchingly of him, and I know that he comes from the land and race of the morning star. From thence came our ancestors, from thence comes every day my Great Father, the Sun, and from thence our prophets tell us, a great good is to come to the people of Amam-Mayu Land. Drink to Huron, the friend of Hualpa Capac." Of course no one dared to refuse compliance, and I looked to see how the

princes enjoyed it. The pigs enjoyed it very well, for it was an excuse for another goblet of wine. Several had to refill before the toast was swallowed. Then the Inca turned and left the room. More wine was brought, the company rearranged itself, and soon I slipped away alone, and sought my chamber to wait.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DRAGON CHAMBER.

I HAD not long to wait. In half an hour Misti was at my door. He did not deem it necessary to make a sign. He merely smiled, I nodded, and he led the way. We entered the Court of the Virgins, crossed the corridor and went into the central tower as we had done before. Then our course changed. With a swift look, full of intelligence, the mute turned to the right through a small passage that led to the foot of a flight of stone steps. They looked rough and uninviting, and were dimly lighted by the light diffused from the room we had just left. At their summit was a small, square stone hall, destitute of ornament. It had a loophole through which I could see the starry sky. I imagined that we were somewhere near the treasure chamber.

Without pausing the mute opened a small door and stood aside for me to enter. I did so, and it was a strange place into which I stepped. I

heard the door close behind me. The room was small, not more than fifteen feet square, and the ceiling was low. Opposite the door through which I had entered was another, closed with a shutter instead of the *portière* elsewhere universally used. To my right was the solid wall, unbroken by any opening. To the left was a tall, narrow window through which I saw the gleam of the stars. The doors, walls, floor and ceiling were totally concealed by plates of gold. These plates were chased, engraved and embossed with a prodigality of ornamentation that was bewildering: Suns, stars, serpents, dragons and flowers were the general material that had supplied the artists with their designs. In the center of the room stood the figure of a dragon rampant, apparently of solid gold. It was about five feet high, and every detail of the artist's imagination was exquisitely wrought in the bright yellow metal. Scales, claws, teeth, eyes, the ribs of the wings, all were vividly lifelike in their representation. From the mouth of this fabulous animal there rose a spiral of perfumed smoke of a blue color, that curled and twisted along the ceiling until it reached the window and there escaped. Over the head of the dragon was suspended a golden lamp of exquisite design and finish. It represented four

large lilies, with upturned stems, each lily cup being a lamp in which a large wick burned as it floated in the perfumed cocoanut oil. Flower and leaf and stem were as perfect in their mimicry of nature as art could make them.

It is no wonder that when the Spanish robbers sent home their spoils the people refused to believe that such marvelous handiwork was the production of human skill, and ascribed it to magic. But the most wonderful thing in that wonderful room was the tall woman who stood by the golden dragon with her hand resting upon its thorny back. It was Amaru. As I entered she was standing with her side toward me, but at the closing of the door she turned her regal head and looked at me. The fascination of that mysterious glance was inexplicable, irresistible. It was cold, yet wistful; commanding, yet longing; steady, yet full of consciousness; and it betrayed neither surprise nor resentment. We gazed at each other in silence until at last it dawned upon my dazed senses that from me was due an explanation of my intrusion. I felt that my heart was in my eyes, and I veiled them with my hand.

"Most beautiful and glorious of women," I said, in a low voice, "believe me when I say I did not intend this intrusion. At the command

of your royal brother I followed his messenger, who bade me enter here. Command me, now, that I may know your will, and do it."

Then she spoke, in a soft, musical voice, wonderfully like that of her brother, but more modestly pitched: "You are Huron, the stranger from the land of the morning star, whom Hualpa Capac has learned to love already. What witchcraft have you used to win him whom no man or woman ever won before, so that he not only trusts you, but brings you to the heart of the nation, the Chamber of the Golden Dragon?" Then seeing that I could not reply, she continued, speaking pleasantly, but without smiling: "Fear not. I am not angry. Perhaps I, too, wished to see the man who has wrought this wonder. Only, I pray you, exert no magic over me. It would not be seemly for the chief Virgin of the Sun to show such a sudden affection as that conceived by Hualpa Capac."

"Lady," I said humbly, raising my eyes to hers; "Love begets love in every human breast, and love is the only magic I have used upon him. From the first moment I saw his face and heard his wonderful voice, so like your own, my heart went out to him. It would be strange if his did not warm toward me in return." At that she smiled a little, still looking into my

eyes. Then I saw that I must escape from her, or be false to Hualpa Capac, and rash words came to my lips.

"Lady," I said, "I would be true and loyal to him even in my thoughts; and because I would be so I beseech you to send me away, before I see you too long." Mad and foolish words they were, and I so felt the peril of them that I covered my face again, and dared not look at her. She did not speak or stir for a moment. Then she said softly:

"These are strange words for you to speak and for me to hear; but because you love Hualpa Capac, and would be loyal to him, Amaru can forgive more than you think. You need not go. Remain here and I will send the Inca hither. He is not far. Meanwhile, for the first time, the Dragon shall be left to the keeping of a stranger."

She stepped to the other side of the image and opened a little door. A puff of smoke greeted her as she looked into the furnace. Apparently satisfied, she closed it and moved toward the opposite door. With her hand upon it she turned and spoke again. "Be always faithful, as you are now, for his sake, and for mine." Then she went out. I felt as though my life went out with her. I stood for awhile stupidly

staring at the door through which she had vanished. Then I raged up and down that weird chamber like one distracted. For the first time in my life I had met a woman grand enough and sweet enough to rouse me, and it was like fire to a dry grass prairie.

As I strode backward and forward muttering to myself I suddenly became aware that Hualpa Capac was standing in the doorway regarding me coldly. I stopped and looked at him.

"Is my friend ill?" he asked calmly. "He seems disturbed."

I was at a loss what to answer. My first impulse was to ask him to send me back to my own people, while I could carry with me his confidence and affection. But even as I opened my lips to speak the impulse died, and back again came that overmastering desire to be near him. Upon one thing I instantly resolved: I would deceive him in nothing. I would strive to justify his confidence. Pulling myself together with a mighty effort I said: "O Bright One, consider the strangeness of my position. It is not wonderful that I am excited by the marvels of this chamber. And most incredible is it that your confidence in me has led me to the Dragon Chamber, and allowed me to meet and speak with your beautiful sister as she watched the sacred fire."

He looked at me curiously. "Do you think her beautiful?" he asked.

"No," I said. "That word is only a compliment for ordinary women. She is far more than beautiful. She is grand. She is divine."

"That is high praise of her, coming from one who has seen the women of many lands," he said, still regarding me with that curious gaze. "How would she compare with their fair ones, stood she beside them?"

I was at first a little surprised at the calm interest he took in the matter; but when I remembered that he knew she was as distant from me as the inaccessible moon, I understood his position. Then I knew that the moment for me to speak had come. "Bright One," I said, "you say truly that I have seen the women of many lands. I have seen and known them when they were adorned with all that wealth or art could add to their attractions; but never before have I met one who could warm a drop of my blood, or stir my heart to one more beat. But this wonderful woman has so impressed herself upon my life in one brief minute that I shall never be the same again that I was before I met her. Bright One, you asked me once if I had never cared for woman, and I told you no. I could not say so to-night. I know my duty to

you who have been so kind to me, and I will be faithful to the last drop of blood in my veins; but because I would be so, because I know that duty so well, I pray you never let me look upon her face again." I knelt upon one knee and bowed my head. Presently he put out his hand and touched my hair. He did not withdraw it instantly, as he had done when once before he made this curious motion, but let his fingers stray there while he stood lost in thought.

At last, speaking softly, as though to himself, he said: "Faithful heart, but unwise tongue. Such words rejoice the Strangler. What think you would be the feelings of the priestess were she to hear such hot praises from your profane lips. But I must protect you from this danger, as I would from all others. Come, my Morning Star, come with me into another room, where we can sit and talk of things more important than a woman's beauty."

We entered the adjoining room. It was somewhat larger than the Dragon Chamber, and had two narrow windows on one side. Beneath them was a slender couch draped in snowy white. In one corner was a divan covered with a silken robe. Rugs, tables, a stand of the arms of his people, and a closed chest completed the furnishing of this plain little room. There were no

guards there to watch our every movement. Not even a mute was present to mar our confidence. It startled me to realize that I was absolutely alone with the Inca. Another thing that puzzled me was to account for the disappearance of Amaru. There was no other door visible yet she was not there. Hualpa Capac noticed my inquiring survey and answered it. "Palaces have their secrets," he said, "and this room has doors that are not readily discovered." He sank upon the corner divan. It was shaped like the letter L and he motioned for me to sit down opposite him. Then he seemed to notice my big feet for the first time. He looked at them with evident approval, and his comment was that of Quantal. "You must be very strong," he said. "Tell me now about your country. Can you show me upon this where it lies?" So saying he spread a small square of fine cotton cloth on the floor and handed me a piece of charcoal. I was at home at that sort of thing. I rapidly sketched both American continents, with the great oceans. Then I drew parallels of latitude and longitude and located Cuzco. Then I placed Chaupimayo, and then, as nearly as I could estimate it, I drew a square for the City Without a Name. Then I explained it to him, and he understood it at once. Then I showed

him the place of my New England home, and drew the route I had followed in reaching Cuzco, giving him a fair idea of the various distances by reckoning them in day's marches of twenty-five miles. He listened in silence, only interrupting now and then to ask an intelligent question. One of them I remember well. "How do you know where to put these lines on the map, Huron?"

"By this watch," I replied, showing it to him. This short hand goes round this circle twice in each day, from noon to noon. Now if I find that when I travel a certain distance to the westward the sun is just an hour later in getting there than he is at the starting point, I know that he travels just that distance in an hour." The Inca made me repeat this. Then he said:

"Yes; that is true."

"Then if I find him ten times as late at another place, I know I am ten times as far west."

"I understand," he exclaimed. "And as long as the pointer travels at the right speed you can always tell how far east or west you are from some place that you have measured." Then I tried to explain how latitude was measured by the elevation of a star, but caught him gazing amusedly at me and evidently not listening. Then he smiled and said:

"Yes, I know it is true, and that is enough. It is wonderful, but I do not need to know it so long as I have you with me."

"Then you will not send me away, as you threatened?" I asked, smiling. He returned my look with a frank smile, and leaning forward took my hand in his.

"Do you wish to go?" he asked, evidently confident that I did not.

"Bright One, I hope to pass my days in your service." He held my hand with one of his, and with the forefinger of the other traced the muscles and veins on the brawny back of mine.

"A faithful heart backed by a strong hand is not easily to be parted with," he said musingly.

"Bright One," I said, curious to know the workings of his mind, "I know that my heart is faithful to you, but my fear is that you may doubt it. Even now I feel that I have made foes in your court."

"No, Huron, you did not make them, for they are foes to any friend of Hualpa Capac."

The tiger gleam was shining quietly in his eyes as he said this. Without waiting for a reply he said, "How do you like the curaca, Quantal?"

"I like him well, O Bright One; for he loves my Inca. He is a man to be depended upon to the end."

"And what think you of my princely cousins?"

"I think they show so little trace of your royal nature that I cannot understand their being of the same blood."

The Inca almost laughed. I did not know his face could express so much of comfortable content and ease of spirit. He was still holding my hand, but now he patted it and let it go.

"You have eyes, my Huron, but you have a tongue also," he said. I felt rebuked.

"I cannot feel that it is indiscreet to answer truly any question Hualpa Capac pleases to ask," I replied.

"You are right," he said heartily. "See." He turned aside and unhooked the ruby ball that glowed on his forehead. He laid it on a table near by and said: "Now we are not Inca and subject, but friend and friend. I claim the privilege of a friend. I want to be abused. Tell me something I do that I ought not to do."

"Your friends would tell you it was wrong to love and trust such a new friend as I," I said, returning his frank smile.

"You do not tell me so, Huron, and until you do I shall trust you. But lest you think me careless in such matters I will tell you that I have taken care to know all that you have said and done since you entered my territory. I

know of your many questions. I know you have learned to hate those whom you think are not my friends, or are dangerous to me or to the Priestess of the Sun. I know that you plan to know the hearts of my curacas, and have made yourself blood brother to Quantal. All this I know, and I see that it is more for my sake than for aught else that you have done these things. Do you not see that I have reason to trust you? You will no longer think it a childish whim, born of idleness and despotic power?"

I felt aghast at this revelation. "How can it be possible?" I exclaimed illogically.

"It is finished," he said. "I shall test you no more. My heart is in your hands. The time comes, and will soon be here when you can use all the knowledge you and Quantal can gain. Then will come that for which I have longed. And you shall give it to me." After a pause he said: "Tell me of some of the wonders of your land."

Then I told him. We talked for hours of the wonders of modern life. I spoke of mighty engines, of steamships, and telegraphs, and the fearful weapons of war. This was the first of many nights when I passed through the Dragon Chamber to the private room, wherein I saw no one but the Inca. Though

I listened and longed I saw no trace of Amaru. When I saw her on the roofs at sunset she never looked toward me. I tried to forget her in work. By order of the Inca a host of men were employed in bringing me specimens of the various rocks from the surrounding mountains and their foothills. My search was for iron ore, and hours were spent each day in examining the minerals brought in. Every night I sought the Dragon Chamber. I needed no Misti now to guide me. The Amazons recognized my right, and I passed all doors unchallenged. The Inca always removed the llautu, and claimed to lay aside his rank with it, a pleasant fiction and well meant. I was great, powerful, respected, envied. In some way I had acquired the name of Morning Star, and it seemed so to please this imaginative people that soon I was called by no other name. In spite of it all my heart longed for Amaru. Never did I enter the Dragon Chamber without a vague hope of surprising her by the image. My health was perfect, but the fret and the longing weighed so upon my mind that I began to grow thin. Hualpa Capac was quick to note it, and inquired the cause. I hardly knew any cause myself, and could not tell him. Finally he told me one night that he feared the confinement in the

palace was the cause of my ill looks, and that he was going to send me on a tour of inspection through the provinces. I did not wish to go, but dared make no objections. In three days all was ready. The night before I was to start we sat long in the private room. He said again and again how much he should miss me.

"I have been lonely all my life, until you came," he said, "and I would not let you go but that you need the journey. You will return in ten days well and strong. I would go with you, but I must make arrangements for the ceremony of the corn-planting."

So I left him and for two weeks saw the Dragon Chamber no more.

CHAPTER XIV.

A REVELATION.

DURING the time spent in inspecting the various military posts, garrisons and patrols, my mind was busily occupied by day with observing the condition of affairs, and at night I made copious notes of what I had seen, with remarks concerning possible changes or improvements. Then, when I should have gone to sleep, I would toss and wrestle with thoughts that I could not banish; and the most torturing of all was the constant longing to see once more the sweet, strong, serious face of Amaru. When my task was done, and I entered again the great bronze gates of the palace I was brown with the scorching of the sun, but had gained neither flesh nor strength. I felt a thrill of pleasure, however, at knowing I was once more under the same roof with my royal friend, and the object of my hopeless love. It was late in the afternoon when I reached the palace, and although I at once sent word to the Inca that I had returned he merely

invited me to supper by way of reply. When the meal was ended, and the small golden cup of honor was passed round, he did not forget me. As I knelt before him to drain it he said in a low tone: "Come soon." It was part of the courtesy of the occasion that the conversation should be continuous, so that its murmur veiled whatever the Inca chose to say to those he honored with the cup. I did not linger long after he had retired, and soon my hand was on the door of the Dragon Chamber. I found Hualpa Capac standing by the image, apparently waiting. When I had entered and closed the door he advanced and, without a word, threw his arms round my shoulders and kissed me on the lips. The caress was as simple and unaffected as that of a child, but I assure you it affected me. Then he took my hand, and still without speaking led me to the divan and drew me to a seat beside him. He scanned my face earnestly and then said: "You look stronger, my Morning Star, but you are still thin. Tell me about your work."

Then I drew forth my notes and detailed the condition of his forts and posts, one by one, with the suggestions that had occurred to me as I made the notes. He listened earnestly, sometimes looking into my face, sometimes gazing abstractedly at the wall, and once, asking me to

draw with charcoal the new lines I had suggested. When the report was complete I paused for his comments. To my surprise they concerned myself instead of the army.

"Yes," he said, as though concluding the silent train of thought that had occupied him, "Yes, you are a soldier, a warrior born to command."

"Nay, Bright One, I have had no training in arms," I replied. "In my country there is a great school where young men are kept for years to learn the art of war. When they leave it they know all that is known to mankind of the art of destruction. I was taught the arts that create, not those that destroy."

"That is better still," he answered, "for you can both create for your people's good, and destroy for their defense." Then he sat thinking, and I did not feel like disturbing him. I wondered where in that great pile of stone she who filled my thoughts could be hiding herself from me. The waves of sadness surged over my soul, and without knowing it I sighed. The Inca looked up quickly, and saw sorrow in my face.

"Ah, Morning Star," he said reproachfully, "why have you brought back with you the sadness you should have lost on your journey?"

Then all my strength gave way, and I cried

piteously: "Oh, Hualpa, kinder than any brother, send me away; not with gold or gems, but only with your love and confidence. Let me go from you, O Bright One, while yet we love each other; for I am very unhappy, and I distrust myself and my strength."

"You wish to leave me!" he cried in astonishment.

"No," I replied, "not that! I wish to be faithful to you; and in word and in deed I am faithful; but in my heart I am a traitor; for I am consumed with love for that glorious woman whom I am not worthy to look upon, your sister, royal Amaru, Priestess of the Sun. No happiness can come to me whether I go or stay; but I cannot bear the kindness in your eyes and know that in my soul I have proven unworthy of your trust. Send me away; or rather slay me, before I go mad and slay myself."

I buried my face in my hands, while the Inca sat motionless and silent. I cared not what form his wrath should take. I knew it must be destruction, and I hoped it might be mercifully swift and sure. Then instead of the scathing words for which I listened there fell upon my ear the sweetest, tenderest voice I ever heard. It said:

"And do you really love her so, my Morning

Star? And has your mighty struggle with yourself ended at last? Do you suppose I have not seen it?" He rose to his feet, and there was a swift swish and rustle, and the soft sound of something thrown upon the floor. Then he said, "Look up, my lover, and see me." Startled, I raised my head. At my feet lay the glittering garments of the Bright One, and before me, clad in gauzy robes, snowy white in color, stood Amaru, glowing with love and beauty. "Yes, my Morning Star," she exclaimed triumphantly, "know now what no other mortal knows save Misti and his brother. Haulpa Capac and the Priestess Amaru are one and the same; and Amaru loves you."

As I sprang to my feet she held out her arms to me. Then the dizzy completeness of my happiness overwhelmed me. I cried out in my native tongue, "My God!" and would have fallen to the floor had not her strong arms supported me. The giddiness passed in a moment. Then with tender reverence, yes, for though after all she was only an Indian woman, yet it was with reverence I yielded to the yearnings of human nature, and folded her in my arms. There is no dialect in kisses, and our rapturous responses to each other's caresses would have been the same in any language. But it did not

last long. She could not forget that she was the irresponsible, unquestioned despot who ruled over a race and guarded a religion. Gently she disengaged herself, and with a sweet seriousness that made me worship her the more she remonstrated against further dallying.

"Sit here," she said motioning me to the divan, "and let me take some of the wonder from your eyes."

Then, sitting beside me, with our hands clasped in each other's, she told me the wonderful story of her life. With the aid of the two mutes who knew all, and of the Amazonian corps, who knew nothing but were faithful and silent, she had ruled over her nation in her brother's stead, and postponed from year to year the fate she dreaded, that of being forced to give herself in marriage to the beastly Anahuac or his brother. She told me how, ten years before my coming, Hualpa Capac had taken too much wine one night at supper, and had fallen backward down the stone steps that led to the Dragon Chamber. She and Misti alone saw the accident. With swift comprehension she charged the mute to make no alarm. Together they bore him to the room wherein we now sat, but he never moved or spoke again. In an hour he was dead. Then the full horror of the situation dawned

upon her, and she determined to take her own life. But in another moment inspired by desperation she determined to try to pass herself for her brother. They were wonderfully alike, and she knew every detail of his government as well as he knew it himself. Indeed I suspect she was always the stronger nature, and guided him. She took the mutes into her confidence. They carried the body into the Hall of Judgment and cast it into the pit where only criminals against the state or its religion were thrown. "It broke my heart to do it," she said, "but there was no alternative." The next day she attired herself in his glittering garments, arranged her hair as he was wont to wear his, hung the ruby llautu on her forehead, and held court as Haulpa Capac. From the first instant down to that moment there had never been the slightest difficulty in her way. Our talk was long and sweet. All the old unrest fled from my breast, and I was full of a great joy.

"It grows late," she said at last, "and you must go to your rest. Great things are about to happen, and you will need all your wisdom and all your strength. You may even have to fight for me and Amam-Mayu Land; but I cannot keep you longer to-night." As we rose to our feet I kissed her passionately on her willing mouth.

"Must I go, sweet Amaru?" I whispered.

"You must go." Her voice was soft, hardly above a whisper, and she sighed softly. But the resolution in her dark eyes forbade remonstrance.

"And how long must it be so, sweet Amaru? Surely a time must come, and come soon, when you will send me away from you no more."

"Ah, my Morning Star, my tall, strong lover, how happy would I be could I bid you stay. From the moment when first I saw you, standing on the Place of Judgment, so tall and strong and brave and honest, my heart went out to you with a great leap, and instead of seeing in you a stranger of the hated race, to be suddenly destroyed, I knew you for the Star that was to come to me, Amaru, the Serpent of the river, and that my fate had come to meet me. Gladly would I hold you thus, and kiss you thus, and thus, until the rising of the sun, but—" and she put me gently away from her and stood before me with all the dignity of the priestess upon her, "I am Amaru, priestess, and chief Virgin of the Sun. My vows cannot be violated. I can be released only to become an Inca's bride. I will never be unworthy of my race, my trust, or of you, for then I would not live to meet your eyes. But look not so dis-

pected that their visit was looked for. He rose from his seat and stood glittering before them.

"Ministers of the Gentle One, the Strong One, the Devouring One," said the Inca, "what brings us the honor of this visit?"

"Hualpa Capac," replied one of the foremost pair, speaking respectfully but with dignity, "we come as messengers from our temple to warn you of danger."

"Danger I have known in the past, and shall know in the future. It has no terrors for me," was the cold reply.

"We know, O Bright One, that nothing can stir the heart of Hualpa Capac to fear; but he loves his country and his race, and will not refuse to listen when they are threatened."

"Speak on," commanded the Inca as the priest paused. I glanced over the room. It was unusually crowded, and all were breathless with interest. I felt that I was the only one there who did not know what was coming.

"O Bright One," resumed the speaker, "you are the last of the house of Tupac Amaru, whose terrible fate in the capital of his fathers is still unavenged. Should our great Father, the Sun, summon you to himself there is none to wear the llautu save Anahuac, or Capal. They also might be taken, and for whom then would the

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At these words there rose a shout of pleasure in every part of the hall. When silence was restored he said: "When the Inca returns from corn-planting he shall lead Amaru, chief son of the Sun to the nuptial chamber. Are you content?" Another great cry of gladness sounded through the hall. Then a strange thing happened. Down the shaft through which fires of death had often flashed there suddenly poured a tide of crimson light, soft and beautiful. It bathed the white-robed priests in splendor, and the Inca's garments were also becoming ruddy and rich, as though incrustated with rubies. It lasted but a second, and disappeared.

"What means this smile of the Sun, O priests?" asked the Inca, seeming as surprised as any one. They looked at each other doubtfully. Then their leader answered boldly:

"It means, O Inca, that your Great Father is pleased with your promise."

"And must we always thus interpret such a vision?"

"Yes, O Inca."

"Only once before has it been seen," said Alpaca Capac. "It was so when my ancestor laid down the llautu and took bow and spear to fight the savages who threatened our city. May

virgins guard the sacred fires? Who would preserve the silver arrow for the hour of vengeance? There should be more arrows than three in the quiver of the Incas. This is the danger, that the line of Tupac Amaru shall cease to guard this land of Amam-Mayu, for until you take a wife it is not lawful for Anahuac or Capal to wed."

"True, O priest; unless I am summoned by the Sun before them," replied Hualpa Capac, looking coldly toward the spot where the princes stood. They looked confused and uneasy under that searching glance, but it was soon withdrawn. Looking again toward the priests the Inca said:

"I know what you desire; and you are right. None but the pure blood of the race of Tupac Amaru must reign in Amam-Mayu Land until the coming of the star from the east to the serpent of the river, whose advent you have so often declared would precede the day of vengeance. Therefore I now declare to you, O Priests of the Sun, and to you, the people of Amam-Mayu Land, that I will yield to your petition. I am not yet aged enough to care for the soft pleasures for which alone so many live, but I cannot longer close my ears to the wishes of my people. I will wed."

At these words there rose a shout of pleasure from every part of the hall. When silence was restored he said: "When the Inca returns from the corn-planting he shall lead Amaru, chief Virgin of the Sun to the nuptial chamber. Are you content?" Another great cry of gladness resounded through the hall. Then a strange thing happened. Down the shaft through which the fires of death had often flashed there suddenly poured a tide of crimson light, soft and beautiful. It bathed the white-robed priests in rosy splendor, and the Inca's garments were also glittering ruddy and rich, as though incrustated with rubies. It lasted but a second, and disappeared.

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"Yes, O Inca."

"Only once before has it been seen," said Hualpa Capac. It was so when my ancestor laid down the llautu and took bow and spear to fight the savages who threatened our city. May

our present intentions have as fortunate an ending."

The audience soon ended and the court dispersed. Soon afterward Misti came to call me. I was conducted to the larger room wherein Hualpa Capac had granted me the first private interview. The Inca was Hualpa Capac now, every inch of him.

"O Morning Star," he said, as I entered, "I have much for you to do. Take now this cloth and draw upon it, near the center, this city." I did as he requested, representing the city by a small square. "Now show me, around it, each one of my posts of thousands." This was an easy task, and soon accomplished. "Now write, in the characters in which you keep words, the names I shall give you. Here write Andoval, at this reserve post north of the castle. At the one south of the castle write Laval. At the northern wall write Reca. At the south wall write Nesel. At the palace write Quantal. Now outside the palace write Rehala. At the eastern patrol station write Issuco. At the river patrol station write Mancato, and Sasuti. Luraca is furloughed. Now, my Morning Star, I shall be much occupied with my preparations for the corn-planting, ten days from now. I have sent messengers to each curaca, directing him to re-

ceive his orders from you from this time until my return from the corn-planting. It is my wish that when the regiments are moved, five days hence they shall be disposed as shown on this piece of cloth. Nevertheless, if you see any good cause for change in the arrangement, use your own judgment." Wondering at the publicity of this order, for there were many Amazons in the room, I bowed assent. "From now until my return I shall be seen by my people only once," he continued. "On the morning of the first day I shall be in the Hall of Judgment. I shall have many more things to say to you, for there is none other with whom I can leave my authority. The curaca, Andoval, will supply you with messengers whenever you need them. I will give you further directions to-night." He dismissed me with a wave of the hand.

I left the audience-chamber utterly bewildered. I reasoned, however, that this wonderful person did nothing without a reason, and that to-night I should probably be given a complete explanation.

One reason was soon apparent. Andoval came to my rooms and asked to receive the password for the night. This caused me to realize that I was virtually in command of the palace. On the spur of the moment I gave him the Quichua

word by which that structure was designated. It was Ingaplica, meaning the House of the Incas.

Soon afterward the chief Amazon made a similar request. She received the same word, but still waited. As I did not know what she was waiting for I remained silent. Presently she said: "My lord of the Morning Star has not given the word for the inner tower. My thoughts had strayed to Amaru, and I gave her "Munay," the Quichua word for love. She looked a little surprised, and for the first time I saw something like a smile flit over her grim features. Thus my first act of authority was to indicate that love controlled the very heart of the empire. After that there was nothing to do but impatiently wait for the night. It came at last, and as soon after the supper hour as possible I hastened to the tower. Every spear was lowered before me, and I entered the Dragon Chamber with beating heart. No one was there, and I hastened to the private sitting room beyond. That, too was vacant. She will come soon, I thought and seated myself upon the divan to wait for her. There was a click in the golden chamber, and the next instant Hualpa Capac entered in all the glittering panoply of his rank.

"Amaru!" I exclaimed, starting to meet her.

"No, my Morning Star," was the reply, and a warning hand was put out to check my advance. "I am Hualpa Capac from this hour until I become an Inca's bride. We love each other too well to tempt each other, and I see that in this instance I, who must be the stronger, cannot trust my strength."

"But," I exclaimed in terror, "how can Amaru become an Inca's bride and yet be mine?"

"Wise one," was the smiling reply, "you do not yet know what wonders the Priestess of the Sun can accomplish when she wills it."

"I have seen many marvels here, Hualpa Capac," replied I, complying with her mood; "and one of them was the kiss of the Sun to-day. What terrible contrivance have you here by which you make him kiss or slay as you will it?"

"Come and see," he answered. "It may happen that the Inca will not return from the corn-planting, and then the Sun-god must sustain you as he has sustained the house of Tupac Amaru." He led the way out through the Dragon Chamber to a place in the wall of the passage, and drawing his dagger he inserted its point into a crack between two huge stones. There was a click, and he pulled back a door. It was of wood, with a very thin slab of rock

fastened to the outside, to render it unnoticeable. We stooped and entered a narrow dark passage, and he closed the door. The darkness was absolute. He took my hand. "Follow freely," he said. "There is no obstacle."

Soon we began to ascend steps, and ere long he raised a trapdoor that permitted us to emerge upon the roof. The moon was shining brightly, and everything was plainly visible. I now saw that the tower was not really as high as it looked from the outside, as the wall extended ten feet above the roof on every side, thus shielding the occupants of the roof from observation. From the gilded pinnacles at the corners the mystic flags drooped in the still air. On the eastern side there was a curious structure that at once caught my attention, and the Inca led the way directly toward it. I understood the arrangement at a glance. Twelve great mirrors of polished silver, so curved parallel with their long axis as to concentrate the rays of an immense area upon one perpendicular line on the opposite side of a square opening in the roof, reclined at an angle of forty-five degrees with the horizon and were immovably fixed. At the point on the other side of the opening in the roof, and just where this perpendicular column of rays would focus, was another mirror curved transversely.

It was mounted on hinges, and thrown back out of focus, but I saw that when swung into focus and over the well it would pour down in one resistless torrent of fire all the tropical heat collected by three hundred and fifty square feet of mirror surface. Any one who has seen a fire kindled by the sunlight falling on a bit of glass an inch square can partly imagine the awful intensity collected by this immense surface.

"I understand the destruction now, my Inca," I said. "How was the rosy light produced, and without danger?"

"With this," he said, and he pointed to another mirror, curved across its long axis. "It is covered with crimson silk, clear and thin, and when it is swung into the sunlight it throws a rich red stream of light against the plates of silver that line the light shaft from top to bottom. It does not stand in the line that would catch the light from the great twelve."

"And who manages all this machinery, and keeps the mirrors bright?"

"Misti and his brother. No one else, but I and thou, knows the secret of the fires of the Sun.

"And how learned you these things, O wonderful one?" I cried in amazement.

"I was taught by my father as he by his.

The Incas have been masters of the sacred fire from generations too many to number. They used it in Cuzco but tore down their mirrors and destroyed them before the invaders gained the secret."

"But how does Misti know when and how to act?" I asked, my wonder growing rather than diminishing.

"That is more admirable than all the rest," replied the Inca. "See this white rod near the opening. It stands in a tube cunningly fashioned of metal when the House of the Incas was built. The lower end of this tube is under the dais in the Hall of Judgment, and it ends in a strong bladder. The tube and the bladder are filled with oil. Misti is always told when to expect a signal, and what it will mean. When the Inca places his foot on the bladder of oil it is forced to flow through the tube and that white rod flies upward. Then Misti or his brother swings the mirror over for a short time, and the fire of the sun does its work."

We returned to the room behind the Dragon Chamber and sat upon the corner divan.

"I have much to say to you, O Morning Star!" began the Inca as soon as we were seated. "The corn-planting will be a time of danger. I have learned that Anahuac and Capal instead of being

pleased that the Inca is to take a wife are angered, and are planning to destroy him. Rather let me say that the men who hope to profit by it are using these weak princes to plot a revolution. I know all their plans. They hope to so manage that the regiment commanded by Rehala, who is the brother of the Chief Haravec, Keeper of the Quipus, who is the father of the man destroyed for enticing a Virgin of the Sun from her vows, shall escort the Inca to the corn-planting. They shall not be disappointed in this. They also hope that Issuca, of the sixth regiment, may command in the palace. Failing this they thought that either the second, eighth, ninth, or tenth regiment would be on duty here, and such would surely have been the case but for my information. Now I do not wish the conspirators to suspect that they are suspected, and so I have caused it to be given out that you will be in command, and that I have signified to you how I wish the regiments to be disposed during my absence. This will disarm suspicion, for they will reason that I would surely not place myself in the power of Rehala did I dream of his treachery."

I was alarmed at once. "Amaru, sweet Amaru," I pleaded, springing to my feet, "do not do this rash thing. Why should you place

your life in the keeping of this traitor? Why not destroy them all, and wait not?"

"Ah, my Morning Star," replied she, "Amaru is not here to-night. It is the Inca who speaks to you. But I can tell you that no event that could possibly occur has so helped Amaru in her plans as this proposed revolt. So glad thereof is she that when the hour of vengeance comes she will spare all save those whose lives threaten her future, and yours. Now listen to the Inca, and answer the questions he must ask. Tell me, does this writing which you make always say the same thing you have written, and never mistake?"

"If it is right when it is written it is right forever," I answered, wondering what was coming.

"Morning Star, the life of Amaru will hang upon the words you are to write. I will not give them to you now. Surely no one ever writes words that will endure forever without careful consideration of what they shall be. On the night before the corn-planting come to this room, and Amaru will see you. She will give you the words that will show you what you shall do to save her life, and to save Amam-Mayu Land. Now good-night, my Morning Star. I have much to do, and will need all my strength for a task that is before me."

"I pray you let me assume your task, if it be possible," I said. The Inca hesitated.

"You could do the work," was the reply, "but it would not be wise at present. I am to receive the Chief Haravec every night, and learn the songs of the quipus. He alone knows them, and I have commanded him to teach them to me, that they be not lost to the people if any accident befalls him. And I greatly fear the traitors will overcome his gratitude to me for sparing his life and the lives of his family. According to the law they would all have perished with his traitor son."

Then I left the tower and went to my apartments.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CORN-PLANTING.

THE night before the day on which the Inca would leave the palace to make the round of the corn-planting came at last. It was nearly midnight before I could safely go to the tower. It seemed that the guests of the Inca were accustomed to detain him in the banquet hall much longer than common on the nights preceding this ceremonial, and the wine circulated more freely than usual. At last I stood in the Dragon Chamber, and saw the Inca awaiting me. We sat upon the divan, and so strong was the impression of Hualpa Capac upon me that I could hardly realize the truth. The Inca was sad, almost gloomy, and not inclined to talk. I endeavored once more to remonstrate against the guard being commanded by Rehala, whose treachery was now known to us.

"It is the only way," was the response. Then, after a pause, "Are you ready to make the words that shall remain the same forever?"

I took from my bosom the memorandum book and pencil and awaited orders. When the Inca saw I waited he began: "I am Hualpa Capac, the last man of the pure blood of Tupac Amaru. I am Haulpa Capac, and beside me there is only Anahuac and Capal of the race of the Incas. If I should die, and they should also die, there is no Inca for Amam-Mayu Land. Who then shall be Inca? Behold our Father, the Sun, has sent us one who is a great warrior and a wise man from the land of the sunrise, and he is called the Morning Star. It is my will that if, by any chance, I and my kindred perish, this Star of the Morning, of whom we have had prophecies, shall rule over Amam-Mayu Land. He shall guard the sacred fire in the heart of the Golden Dragon. He shall lead to his nuptial couch Amaru, the sister of Hualpa Capac, that thus may be fulfilled the prophecy that a Star from the East should wed a Serpent of the River, and they should have a son whose name should be Amam-Amaru, the avenger of our wrongs. He shall do justice in the Hall of Judgment. He shall plant the corn, and distribute the harvest. He shall be the father of the Quichuas. All this shall he be and do, if Hualpa Capac, and Anahuac, and Capal be destroyed. I am Hualpa Capac. I have said it."

As I took down these words my amazement grew. What could be the meaning of all this?

"Have you made the words?" the Inca asked.

"All is written as you have spoken."

"Those are the words Hualpa Capac will speak to his people in the morning, before he starts for the field."

"But what does it all mean, my Inca? I do not understand."

"O Morning Star, I prepare for what may happen. When the Inca goes to the field he may be destroyed, for treachery is abroad. But it is possible that Anahuac and Capal may also perish. Then you will be Inca, and none will oppose you. But if either of them lives, and I return not, take your weapons and flee hastily with Quantal and a small band of his men, to the northern wall, where you may easily escape to the forest. Then make your way to the great ocean."

"My dear one," I exclaimed, "I do not wish to be Inca. I want only you and your love."

"Both you shall have, if I live. But if I die, do as I have said. Now make more words, and make them carefully, for they carry the fate of Amaru and of Amam-Mayu Land.

"To-morrow night, just before the dawn of day, stand you with Quantal, or with Misti, at

the southern gate of the palace. From that hour be you or Quantal, or Misti there without fail until you receive a messenger from me. The token shall be this silver arrow tipped with gold. Conduct the messenger instantly to your apartment, and receive his message in private. If he bears no message, or if no messenger comes before the sun is an hour high, then know that the plans of Amaru have failed, and take your weapons and flee as I have directed. But if he bears a message, he shall first utter the name of the Priestess of the Sun. Then shall you listen to his message. These are the words of Amaru to her beloved, her Morning Star."

Suddenly, at these words, the Inca faded and the woman dawned. She threw herself upon my bosom and there were real, womanly tears in those tawny eyes as she kissed me again and again, saying: "It is for you, my love, for you. But oh, if it should fail; if this should be the last time." I was so stupid that I did not even then understand what she purposed to do; but I knew it was useless to try to dissuade her, and only tried to comfort her.

"In all things but one I will obey the Inca's command," I said. "But if harm comes to you your enemies shall reckon with me before they enjoy their triumph."

The next morning there was a great gathering of the people in the Hall of Judgment. It was early, about nine o'clock, that Hualpa Capac appeared on the dais in all his glittering splendor.

He said he had something to say to his people before leaving the palace; and then he repeated the words he had first told me to write, the night before. Then, calling me to stand by his side upon the dais he said: "This place, O Morning Star, is yours until my return. Guard thou the Dragon's heart of fire by night, until my return. The priestess Amaru will guard it by day. Let every officer of the palace, and the commanders of the Thousands, hear the words of Morning Star as my own, until my return. Farewell, Morning Star, brother of my soul," and he kissed me before all the people. Then he descended from the dais and Anahuac and Capal, armed to the teeth, walked one on either side to guard him, as was the custom at the corn-planting. They entered their litters and were borne away southward, amid a great shouting and singing and clapping of hands, the Thousand of Rehala going half of them before and half of them behind the litters. As they passed through the great gates of bronze I stood where I could catch a parting glance at the Inca's face. It was dark and gloomy, and his eyes gazed

straight ahead, with a look of fate in their tawny depths. I returned to my apartments with Quantal. I found Misti there, busying himself about the room. He showed no indication of intending to leave us, much to Huanaro's disgust. I guessed that his mistress had directed him to be near me as much as possible. I made some errand to send my faithful Quichua away, and then, knowing that Misti could not hear us, I told Quantal to be seated, for I had something I wished to say to him. He obeyed, but there was a look of bewilderment and awe upon his face that I had never seen there before.

"Quantal, my friend," I said; "Hualpa Capac has left me a great trust. As he trusts me, so do I trust you. I have matters of importance to lay before you. But before I speak of them tell what you think of what the Inca said before he set out."

"There is no need to think," he answered. "What could happen that would destroy them all three?"

"Quantal," I replied, "no one can tell what may happen when law sleeps and violence reigns. Hualpa Capac suspects some treachery. Listen to the words he spoke to me last night. He said we were to watch at dawn, for a messenger from him to the southern gate. If no

messenger comes by the time the sun is an hour high, or if he comes bringing only a silver arrow with a golden tip, you are to take a small band of chosen men, and escape by way of the northern wall; for he will be no longer living, and his foes and your foes will rule the empire. But if that messenger brings a message, and a word, I am to take him to my apartments where I may hear his message in private; and the message will tell me what to do. The Inca may need assistance. See, therefore, that you have ready swift runners to bear messages to the friends of Hualpa Capac."

By this time the curaca was walking the floor greatly disturbed. "The Inca is great, and wise," he said; "but I cannot see why he has done this thing. Anahuac and Capal are his bodyguards, and a traitor commands the regiment. Why did he not take me, or one of the other four who are his friends?"

"So did I entreat him to do, curaca, but he would not."

All that day I wandered to and fro in the palace. I watched the sacred fire surreptitiously, for well did I know that no Amaru would be near to remedy any neglect of mine. I found the brother of Misti was keeping the lamp supplied with oil, at the command, doubtless of his absent mistress.

When night came neither Quantal nor I thought of sleep. We wandered about the inner courtyard like unquiet ghosts. Once he asked me why the Inca had commanded him to escape, and had not told me to go with him. "He did so direct," I answered. "But if harm comes to him I do not leave this land until his fate is awfully avenged, or I am slain."

"And did he think I would leave the task to you alone?" he asked fiercely. "Now, my blood brother, do I know that you are a warrior, for you dare a danger for yourself that is hopeless, and you would dare it alone. But let me tell you that if harm comes to the Inca five thousand soldiers will follow you on your road to vengeance, but not one to the northern wall."

"I expected no less of you, curaca," I replied; "I expected no less from you; but it is not for such a morning that we hope."

Toward morning we grew too restless for the walls to hold us, and ordering the gates opened we passed outside. There we stood with straining eyes and ears watching and listening for the messenger of fate. Just as the air was trembling with the approach of dawn a running figure appeared coming across the parade. As the runner approached I could hear the rasping sound of his breath which came in sobs. He was almost

exhausted. He saw us standing by the gate, and help up his hand to show the silver arrow. I sprang forward and seized him by the arm; for I feared he would fall. "Have you a message?" I demanded fiercely. He nodded assent.

"Whisper a word to me."

He gasped out "*Amaru*."

"He has the word and the token," I said to Quantal. "Come to my apartments in half an hour and learn the message."

Then I dragged rather than led the panting wretch to my room. There was no one there but Misti. To my surprise he sprang to the bathroom and returned with a gourd of water. The runner drank it eagerly.

"Now, your message," I said. The runner glanced round the room as if to assure himself that no one else would hear. Then he raised the matted hair from his forehead, stood up erect and lost the stoop from his shoulders, and with a warning gesture looked me full in the face. With a great shock I saw that it was *Amaru*. Her face was blazing with a wild storm of emotions, among which triumph seemed the uppermost. Her sunken eyes and pale lips spoke of the utmost fatigue. I begged her to have some wine, but she refused.

"What does Quantal know?" she asked eagerly.

"Nothing, only that I was to expect a messenger."

"Good. Now take me to the door and say, in the hearing of your guard, that the mute will take me to Amaru, where I can deliver the message I bear to you, so that she can hear it with her own ears. In a few minutes Misti will return with a man who will look as I look now. These are the words you are to say to him. Say them in the presence of the curaca, so that he may be sure to hear them. Say, 'Take this token to the Inca, Hualpa Capac, and no other. Tell him that by noon his request will be fulfilled. See that you open your lips to no man save Hualpa Capac.' Then give him the arrow, and send him out through the south gate. Now this is the message you may repeat to Quantal. 'Hualpa Capac says to his brother, the Morning Star, and to his faithful curaca, Quantal, that treachery seeks his life. If they would see him alive they must bring him aid by the hour of noon.'"

"Can you remember all this, as I have said it?"

I had been making rapid memoranda as she spoke and I assured her it should be done. The entire programme was faithfully carried out. The new messenger was so like the one who had entered that Quantal expressed regret that he

had not provided a fresh runner. He was on fire with apprehension for the safety of the Inca, and furious at his foes. Five minutes after the messenger had left us other messengers were flying north and south with orders for Andoval and Laval to report at the palace as soon as human speed could accomplish it, leaving one hundred men to guard each station. The sun was now risen and I hastened to the Dragon Chamber. Amaru was alone in the inner room lying upon the white couch by the wall opposite the divan. She was dressed in the white embroidered robes of her priestly office. As she lay there limp and exhausted there was a look of happiness on her face that softened its firm lines until she was almost beautiful. I knelt by the side of the couch and kissed the hand she held out to me. She was not satisfied with that, but drew my head to her bosom and kissed me passionately. Then thrusting me away almost rudely she exclaimed: "This is no time for dalliance. Now, my lover, go and sit on yonder divan, while we arrange the next step in this business."

I did not obey her, but seated myself upon the floor by the side of the couch, still holding her hand. Then I said: "Tell me what it all means, sweet one. How will you explain the absence of Hualpa Capac from the corn planting."

"Let those explain it whose business it was to guard him," she answered fiercely. "Listen, and I will tell you what happened last night. The Inca complained of fatigue and retired early to the apartments assigned to him. He invited Anahuac and Capal to sup with him, and they were not ready to disobey. Wine was abundant, and they became drunk. They slept at the table. Then the Inca stepped out into the night alone, bidding the guard at his door wait there, and not follow him; for he would be alone for a little while. There was a thicket not far in the rear of the house, and he entered it. There he tore off his jeweled garments, rending them, and smearing them with blood he had brought in a bladder for the purpose. Under them he wore a common laborer's tunic. He concealed his leggings, and sandals, and the ruby llautu in the breast of his tunic, and was about to start on his flight to the palace when he heard footsteps approaching, and lay down in the grass by the roadside. Then Rehala, the curaca of the Thousand that formed his guard, and the captain of the hundred on guard, and the Chief Haravec, and Sassuti, who should be on the river patrol, passed near him, and stopped to talk where he could hear their words. It was well, O Morning Star, that the flight was arranged for last

night. The captain of the guard was speaking. He said that when the watch was changed for the last time the men were to be full of wine, and those who were appointed would softly enter the room of Hualpa Capac and fall upon him with their spears. Then they would place the llautu upon the head of Anahuac, who had promised them great power when he should come to reign. Capal was ignorant of the plot, but they felt sure he would not object.

"The object of all their words was to persuade the Chief Haravec, Keeper of the Quipus, to join in the plot, and to sing the song of the quipus to suit the desires of Anahuac. The old man refused to have anything to do with the matter. He said I had spared his life when it was justly forfeited and he could not do me an injury. Then they made him promise to at least hold his peace, and not betray them; and then Sassuti walked on with him, and Rehala bade the captain of the guard detail two trusty men to follow the Chief Haravec, and see that he did not approach the pavilion of the Inca, nor send him any message. When they had passed by I arose from the grass and fled. And I am here; and Haulpa Capac is lost forever; and Anahuac and Capal are traitors and must die; and it is for you and Quantal, and Andoval, and Laval to do the rest. I leave it in your hands."

"Fear not, beloved," I answered, my blood boiling at the thought of her narrow escape from being so treacherously slain. "Rest you here in peace. I will attend to those traitors."

"It is well, my Morning Star. When they are dead, come to Amaru."

"Dead," I exclaimed. "I will bring them to you alive. Surely there are dungeons here in which such men can be safely kept from doing further harm." She looked thoughtfully at me a moment. Then she said:

"Your plan is good. Bring them here. When you have taken them send swift runners to me, and also send messengers to the priests of the temple to meet you in the Hall of Judgment to judge the murderers of Hualpa Capac, for such they are in intention, and such they will seem to really be. But see that you take them there only during the time that passes between the half hour before noon, and the half hour after noon; for then only is it lawful to execute judgment in that hall."

When I reached my rooms again the sun was an hour high. Quantal was there restlessly pacing the floor. "Curaca," I said, "had we not better try to sleep a little? We have a hard day before us, and must soon be on the road."

"Is my lord, then, going with us?" he asked,

"Surely," I answered. "Who else should strike to save the Inca, or to avenge him if harm has befallen him?"

"Right!" said Quantal.

"Curaca," I said, "send now swift runners along the road which the Inca went yesterday until they see the camp of Rehala. Bid them return at once and report what they see."

"My lord it has been done. Already they must be near the traitor's camp."

"How long ere Andoval can reach us?"

"The messenger would run the four leagues in an hour, for he was like the storm when he heard the words he was to speak. The curaca would be on the road with his force in a quarter of an hour. In an hour and a half they would be here. That is two hours and three-quarters. It is an hour and a half since the messenger started. In an hour and a half they will be here."

"That is good," I said. "Laval will make the same haste. There is indeed no time for sleep. Place now one hundred men on each of the four sides of the palace to guard the walls. Give orders that the gates be barred to all save those who bear our token, which shall be a scarlet ribbon, and the password I will give before we go. Let him listen to the words of such

messengers only, and their words shall be my words. Take the remaining six hundred of your men, and make them ready for instant marching."

"They are already armed, and ready, O Morning Star."

"Then let them eat, and we also. Likewise have food prepared for the two thousand now starting to come to our aid. It may be that they will have to fight, and will need their strength."

Quantal retired to give the order, but returned in a few minutes. "Will it not be wise to go upon the roofs, to see what may chance to be passing?" he asked. I assented, and we climbed the stairs.

"There are some things we must know without seeing them," I said, as we stood surveying the country. "In the first place we should remember that if harm is meant to the Inca, harm is meant to us also. He is in their power; we are not. Now they should properly try to capture us by some stratagem; but they should also be prepared to use force. Therefore it is probable they have arranged for some of the hostile regiments to be near the castle, ready to attack it suddenly if necessary. Also we should judge that if any evil has been done the whole of their

forces will be making their way in this direction, to establish the power of the traitor in the capital. If such is the case we shall not go far before we meet them. If they meet us very soon we may know that they have accomplished their designs. Then is left to us the task of vengeance. But if they come not toward the city, then we may know that they have not yet dared to strike."

"My lord is a warrior," said Quantal. "The words he has spoken are wise and cannot be wrong."

While we stood there watching there appeared low down in the northern sky a yellowish haze. It grew thicker and mounted higher, and I saw that it was a cloud of dust. It marked the road to the reserve station whence Andoval was to come, and soon the glitter of spears was visible, and a solid column of Indian soldiers, eight abreast, came into view, marching in a long dog trot, more swift than a double-quick, tireless as the eagle's flight. They crossed the parade and halted under the walls. Soon another dust-cloud appeared in the south, and nine hundred more Indians took their stand before the walls. Without any delay food was served to them, Quantal's men issued from the bronze gates, and they closed behind us with a clang. I mounted a

litter, for I knew I could not keep up with these swift travelers, and was about to give the order to march when a runner made his appearance coming from the south. When he reached us he came directly to my litter, and bowing before me held up a small silver arrow, the token generally sent by an Inca to warrant belief in the orders or messages spoken by the runners. "What are the words you have brought me, and who sent them?" I asked him.

"They are the words of Hualpa Capac," he said.

Here was the treachery I had expected. My companions had not the knowledge that enabled me to know the message was spurious, and the three curacas listened eagerly to his words. "Speak," I said.

"These are the words of Hualpa Capac," chanted the runner in his professional sing-song. "Morning Star, the friend of the Inca, is to take Quantal, the curaca, and a guard of twenty men, and come to join Hualpa Capac. They are to come along the road that leads to the southern patrol station on the river. Soon they shall meet those who shall guide them. These are the words of Hualpa Capac. Make no delay."

I looked at Quantal. He was evidently puzzled. Then I had the messenger taken away for

refreshments, and caused all but the three chiefs to retire. Then I spoke freely.

"Chiefs," I said, "what we feared has come to pass. Hualpa Capac was to send me no message without a whispered word. The messenger had it not. Therefore some one else has sent this message to decoy me and Quantal into a trap. I am going the road the traitors have ordered, until I meet them, and unless they show me Hualpa Capac alive and well, I will take vengeance upon them without mercy. If he is there, and all is well, then we will guard him until the corn-planting is ended. Now who will go with me, regardless of this supposed order of the Inca?"

"Morning Star," replied Quantal promptly, "the Inca ordered us to take our orders from you only until his return. It is for you to speak, and for us to obey."

"It is well," said I. "Let that runner be kept a prisoner. Now, march."

The twenty-four hundred men were in motion in less than a minute, swinging along in that steady trot that covered so much ground in a short time. My litter rose and fell and swayed as we swept along, and the people of the city stared curiously at us as we passed. I need not say that my arms were in good condition, and

ready for use. About five miles from the city we began to meet Quantal's scouts returning. They brought exciting news. The camp of Rehala was in commotion. There was running about and shouting, and the scout had come to report. Soon another came in. When he turned back the Thousand of Rehala was marshaled, and was marching this way, led by the Inca in his litter. Soon another came to say that the people were leaving their fields to follow the regiment, and there seemed to be great excitement. When this news came I halted the command. Calling the chiefs to my litter I told them we must not march farther, or our dust would betray us. We had just crossed a little stream with a thicket, or grove, along its banks, and were now between two fields of grain. I ordered Andoval to take his men behind the field on the right, and Laval to take his behind the field on the left, and make the men lie down and remain concealed.

Then I sent Quantal's men back to hide in the thicket. The only orders were, that when they heard a noise like a short thunderclap they were to rush to the spot where now we stood, ready for fighting if necessary; but to strike no blow until ordered by me or Quantal.

I went back with Quantal's men, and soon all

were concealed. Then I sent a man up into a tree to watch the road and let me know when the head of Rehala's column appeared. Then I took Quantal and twenty men and my litter bearers, and posted them in the road by the little brook, waiting for the approach of the traitors. I was fast asleep in my litter when Quantal touched my arm.

"Their dust is rising," he said. Soon the man in the tree slid swiftly down.

"They are coming," he said. Then the bearers took up my litter, the twenty men divided, ten in front and ten behind, and we crossed the brook and went up the hill to the spot commanded by my ambush. The Thousand of Rehala was in full view as we approached, and at its head, on the royal litter, sat a figure clad in gorgeous robes, with a red ball hanging on its forehead. Beside the litter marched Rehala himself, and I could imagine the chuckle of satisfaction the rogue would give as he saw me and Quantal so easily falling into his cunning trap. When they were within a hundred yards he sent runners with orders for us to open for him to pass. I laughed.

"Open," I said, "and take these runners in. Now stand thus." The order was obeyed and thus we stood awaiting them.

Deceived by this apparent obedience Rehala and his men came steadily on. When they were within twenty paces of us I commanded my men to close up. They instantly obeyed, and the way was blocked. The other column halted suddenly within thirty feet of my front of spears. Then Rehala strode to the front, his face ablaze with rage.

"Stand aside, slaves," he shouted, "until your master passes; and then his dogs shall pick your bones."

"Where is our master, Rehala?" I asked mildly.

"There he is, Anahuac Capac, Inca of Amam-Mayu Land. Down on your face, you dog, and lick the dust at his feet before you die."

"If you have murdered the Bright One, you traitor, you shall not live to enjoy your triumph; and no other man shall be my master." As I said these words I leveled my rifle and shot him between the eyes. He fell to the earth in a crumpled heap. As I slipped in a fresh cartridge I noticed that though the head of the column was a little startled and confused they did not seem at all terrified by the death of Rehala. Some tried to lift him up, but more put arrow to string, or lowered a ready spear.

They waited only for an order to attack me

furiously. Suddenly there was a crashing noise in the grain to the right and the left. A great chorus of voices rose in a fierce chant, and the regiments of Andoval and Laval came charging fiercely up on either hand, while Quantal's men rushed past me from the rear, and formed a wall of spears before my foes. Then there was a commotion in the Thousand of Rehala. Some handled their weapons as though ready to fight; some looked here and there as though they would fly, and the column wavered first to one side and then to the other, like a cord shaken by a wind. When my men were near the flanks of the entrapped command I ordered them to halt, and they did so. Standing on my litter I shouted the Quichua word for peace, holding my hands up with palms outward. After awhile, when they saw they were not to be attacked at once, they began to listen to me.

"Listen to me, men of Amam-Mayu Land," I cried. "You all know that I am the friend of Hualpa Capac, left by him in command of the palace and the Thousands while he went to the corn-planting. Last night he sent a secret messenger to me, saying that he feared treachery, and asking for help. I have brought that help. Now speak, some one of you who love Hualpa Capac, and tell me where is he?"

Then the foremost captain stepped forward and said: "Friend of Hualpa Capac, we know not where he is. This morning his pavilion was found empty, and his bloody garments were in a thicket behind it. Rehala and Sassuti declared wild beasts had carried him off in the night, as he walked to view the stars. They declared Anahuac Inca, and we are returning to the palace. We knew naught of this treachery, and would have defended him against it. We have done no wrong, but we will fight you if we must."

"You are a brave man and a good soldier," I answered him, "and I believe you and most of your comrades knew nothing of this treachery. But it rests not with you, nor with me, to say what now must be done. Why should the people of Amam-Mayu Land destroy each other when the Priests of the Sun are in his temple to ask of him what is right. Let us all, therefore, go at once to the city, and in the Hall of Judgment we shall learn what is right and what is wrong. And there shall be peace, and not war in Amam-Mayu Land. Send forward the litters of Anahuac and Capal, that they may go before me to the palace."

My men opened their ranks and the opposing regiment, after a moment's hesitation, did the

same. Then the litters of Anauhac and Capal passed by me, and my men closed round them. But the litter of Capal was empty. He had flown. At that moment Sassuti came hurrying up, evidently intending to upset my arrangements, but he was too late. Anahuac was in my power, and before he realized what to do I had directed him to come to my side, and he had come. Then we started for the palace. Quantal's men led the way, Rehala's regiment followed, and my two faithful Thousands followed them. Everything was as I would have it, and I was satisfied. By eleven o'clock I had reached the bronze gates, my expedition entirely successful.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE NEW INCA.

I DID not forget to send forward the messengers to the commander of the post, and to Amaru, with the token and the word agreed upon. Quantal's men entered the gates with me and my prisoners, for such they were, while Rehala's men camped under the walls, and Andoval and Laval halted at the outer edge of the parade. Thus the suspected regiment was between two fires. We had not reached the palace five minutes when the Thousand of Sassuti came hurrying up. They had been following Rehala's movements, on another road, intending to join him at the gates. They too were assigned camping quarters between my forces. Then I sought Amaru. There was a great light of triumph and pride in her eyes as she listened to my account of the morning's work. Then she said:

"There is no time to be lost. Go now to the Hall of Judgment and take your stand where Hualpa Capac stood. The High Priest, with his

fellows will be there. Cause him to stand at your right hand to declare judgment. You will know what to say. Invite me to stand at your left hand. Do not let us remain on the steps, but up beside you. Make Anahuac and Sassuti to stand in the place of judgment and account for Hualpa Capac. Go now, my Morning Star, I cannot rest until this matter is finished."

I entered the hall through the *portière* behind the dais. It was filled with a crowd of people whose excitement, though silent, was intense. I saw many anxious faces, and many lowering ones, but there was no way to distinguish friend from foe.

Below the dais, at my right, stood the High Priest of the Sun, with his white-robed fellows. At my left, through a white *portière*, entered Amaru, and her throng of Virgins. An unusual number of the Amazons stood in solid phalanx before me, and the place of judgment was vacant. I seated myself upon that throne whereon no one save the Inca had ever sat before. I determined that this hour was to decide my fate, and I would play a bold hand. I saw Quantal at the farther end of the hall, looking gloomily at me, and wondered what was the matter with him. Turning to the High Priest I said:

"O High Priest of the Gentle One, the Strong

One, the Devouring One, a great crime has been done in Amam-Mayu land. Those who should have guarded our Inca, Hualpa Capac, the Shining One, betrayed him, and he is dead. Were they only Quichuas I would not trouble you for your aid; but in the veins of one of them there runs a few drops of the sacred blood; therefore it is needful that wisdom shall guide justice, and not vengeance alone. Stand here, therefore, at my right hand, and help the friend of Hualpa Capac do that which is right before the law and in the face of the Sun. And you, O Priestess, chief Virgin of the Sun, sister of Hualpa Capac, whom I have so loved, stand thou upon my left, that thy voice may also be heard in this great matter.

Without a word they solemnly ascended the steps and stood as I had directed. Then I briefly stated to the silent throng the events of the past twenty-four hours, and directed that Anahuac and Sassuti should be brought to stand in the place of judgment, to answer for the Inca's safety, and explain his disappearance. In a few minutes the blue-clad ushers led them to the place of judgment. Anahuac walked with a jaunty careless air, and the glance in his snaky black eyes was absolutely triumphant as he met my gaze. I did not know what he was depend-

ing upon, but I saw that he considered himself master of the situation. Sassuti was not so impudent in his appearance, but he evidently felt no fear.

"Anahuac and Sassuti," I said, as they halted fearlessly upon the fatal spot, "yesterday one of you departed from this hall to guard Hualpa Capac at the corn-planting. Sassuti, you were detailed to watch the southern patrol by the river. Now you are here, and your Thousand stands outside the walls, its post deserted. And Anahuac is here wearing a llautu, and Hualpa Capac is dead. I have caused you to stand before the Sun, and before me, the friend of Hualpa Capac, and these holy ones, to answer to me and to Amam-Mayu Land for these things." At this moment Amaru stepped forward, and bowing touched her palm to the floor and then to her forehead, thus acknowledging my authority before them all.

"Will my lord permit me to speak?" she asked humbly.

"Speak on, sister of Hualpa Capac," I said.

"Last night, O Morning Star, I had a vision. I found myself in a little thicket in the rear of the pavilion of Hualpa Capac. While I stood there four men passed by. They were Rehala, Sassuti, the captain of the morning watch, and

the Keeper of the Quipus. Their talk was of death, and of the Inca. But the Keeper of the Quipus was not one of them, though he heard their words. He stands by yonder pillar, my lord. I pray you question him concerning this vision."

The old man did not wait to be questioned. Raising his hands in astonishment he cried, "My lord it is true. The vision was true. Behold, it happened even as she has said."

"O Morning Star," continued the priestess, "my vision changed, and I read the heart of Hualpa Capac. He saw that the people of Amam-Mayu Land should never look upon his face again and he remembered with comfort the words he left with his people in the morning. Then my vision clouded and I saw no more."

The impression created by this dramatic incident was tremendous. People looked at each other awe-stricken, and whispered softly together. I turned to Anahuac and Sassuti and said:

"Where is Hualpa Capac?" and my voice was stern and threatening. Sassuti looked toward Anahuac, but he only grinned satirically, and said nothing. Then Sassuti said:

"Hualpa Capac is dead. Who then save Anahuac shall be Inca. By him alone will I be judged. Come," and he took the hand of

Anahuac, "let me lead you to the throne of your fathers."

They made as though they would come forward, and I thrust my hand into my bosom and seized my revolver. I knew that they must die, or Amaru and I were lost. Quantal had hidden his face in his hands. But before the traitors could take a single step that awful fire from heaven poured down upon them in a tide of intolerable brightness and heat. They sank instantly to the pavement, dead, while the fire glowed, and steamed, and blazed, until the blaze of their consuming roared high into the light shaft. The whole assembly gave a cry of horror and astonishment and prostrated themselves before the unbearable glory. Even the High Priest hid his face in the dust, and Amaru, too, was bowed before it. In all that hall I alone stood erect. At last it was done, and the great white light retreated up the tunnel. The people began to recover from their surprise. Then the room became darkened, and suddenly I found myself standing in the midst of a bright rosy glow that illuminated me, and me only. As I stood there, amid the shining, there arose from the multitude a great shout: "The Judgment of the Sun. The Judgment of the Sun." Suddenly Amaru arose, and seizing a small package that lay nearby

placed it upon her shoulder in token of servitude, and exclaiming, "Huron Capac," prostrated herself at my feet. Then Quantal rushed forward and did likewise. The effect was magical. The hall was filled with delirious shouts of "Huron Capac, Morning Star of Amam-Mayu Land." The news spread through the palace, across the courtyard, and to the troops outside, and the hoarse roar of their distant shouts came in dull waves through the windows of the crowded hall. Suddenly Misti appeared through the *portières*, and handed to Amaru a small trinket. She gave it to the bewildered High Priest, and he took it and in a dazed sort of way hung it on my fillet so that it depended between my eyes. It was the ruby llautu.

Then the High Priest and the Priestess stepped down from the dais to their regular station on the steps. Another great shout arose as the people saw the sacred symbol. I caught a glance from Amaru that seemed to direct me to the *portière* behind me. I took the hint, and bowing graciously to the assembly turned and passed from their sight. I could hear them dispersing in great excitement, and I, too, was excited, for I was Inca.

CHAPTER XIX.

MY COUNSELLORS.

So swiftly had events succeeded each other, so great and startling were they, so completely successful had been all the plans of my grand schemer, that now that all was accomplished, and a moment of possible rest presented itself, I sank upon a divan exhausted. No one was in this antechamber, and I knew that no one would venture to enter it without being summoned. As I sat there a feeling of stupidity, that was the reaction from intense mental activity, swept over me. I felt no elation, but rather a sensation of sadness for which I could see no reason. I did not regret the destruction of the rascals who had perished. They got no more than they deserved, and I did not give them a moment's thought. Finally I rose and made my way to the Dragon Chamber, hoping for an interview with Amaru. She was not there, but I conjectured that she must soon enter, and sat down to wait for her. After a quarter of an hour I went

to the outer door, and told one of the Amazons on guard there to send Misti to me. In a few minutes the mute stood before me, and I bade him seek the Priestess and say that I wished to see her. In a few minutes there was a click in the Dragon Chamber, and she came into the retiring room. She still wore her sacred robes, and there was a sweet air of humility in her manner that was the one womanly touch needed to make this South American queen irresistible.

"My lord, the Inca, sent for me," she said, in a soft, deep voice that thrilled me to my very heart. Without a word I took her hand and led her to the divan. When we were seated I took the llautu from my forehead, and laid its flashing ball in her lap.

"Sweet Amaru," I said, "here there is no Inca. I am Huron, your lover, and you are Amaru, love of my life, and sweetest of women."

A great wave of love and joy swept over her noble features. Before I knew what she would do she had risen and thrown herself at my feet. Then she seized my hand and kissed it, while tears rolled from her wonderful eyes, now so soft, and gentle. I made her resume her place by my side.

"I am happy, my Morning Star, happier than ever before," she said, in a voice so low that I

could scarcely understand her, "and I am proud of the lover who has chosen me. He is worthy to sit on the throne of Tupac Amaru, for he is wise and brave."

"Brave," I exclaimed, smiling. "It is you who are brave. It is you who have accomplished all these impossibilities. It is you who have faced the dangers and destroyed the traitors. Do you not see that the courage is yours, and yours alone?"

"No," she answered proudly. "It shall always fare ill with whatever stands between me and your love, my Morning Star. Whoever dares to do so it were better for him that he roamed the great salt desert, shelterless, and without water, than brave the wrath of Amaru."

As she spoke the passion that she had repressed blazed out afresh, and she showed me a glimpse of the relentless energy that vitalized her great love.

"Fear," she continued, "what is fear? Did you feel it when you slew a curaca in the midst of his soldiers? Yet you knew that only a word was needed to pierce you with a thousand arrows. No, my lord, my beloved, there is no fear in our hearts, for we are royal. I am the Serpent of the River, and I glide in the jungle not from fear of my foes, but because they would fly at

sight of my painted sides. You, my Morning Star, are like the eagle, who hides not at all, but strikes and soars, and is ready to strike again. Together we will rule this people, and wherever the eagle flies the serpent will follow through the jungle, ready with cunning wisdom and hidden strength to aid his bold and fearless strokes. And we will make this a great nation; and the great vengeance shall become a reality, and not a dream."

Her fierce, impetuous nature seemed to find relief in this tropical luxuriance of expression, for she paused a moment, and looked at me. Then she spoke again, in a gentler manner: "I knew you were one of the fearless when first you answered me from the place of judgment, and dared me to look into your eyes and read truth. No man ever before so answered an Inca on his judgment throne. I said in my heart, 'The Sun has answered the prayers of his virgin. My royal mate has come at last. The wilderness has yielded to him, the Sun has guided him; the Star of the East has come to the Serpent of the River; and Amaru shall live, and love.' " Her passion was superb. It would have been a small soul that did not recognize its grandeur. It shook me like a storm.

"You are great. You are great," I cried.

"You plan and execute like the great ones of history. You love with the love of a great woman. Help me, O my love, my life, to be worthy of your greatness."

Then the fire in her eyes died away. The lofty mien melted into softness. She kissed me like an ordinary mortal, and said, "Amaru is the servant of the Inca."

"No," I answered. "I am Inca, thanks to you; but Amaru was not born to serve. In the land whence I came the wife is not the servant, but the companion and equal of the husband. Such are you to me, sweet Amaru. Counsel now with me what next should be done; for events like those of to-day are not finished with a word. Tell me, will the people of Amam-Mayu Land be satisfied?"

"Yes, my Inca, for they recognized the judgment of the Sun, and that it was just. Though Hualpa Capac was but a shadow, yet they would have murdered him, and they are justly punished. The High Priest crowned you, and he and the curacas and the whole court called you Capac. But stronger than all else is the power of their belief that you are the Star of the East, for which our race has looked so long. From the first day I have scattered that thought through the land, so that when first Hualpa Capac

called you Morning Star the name swept through Amam-Mayu Land like a fire in a dry field. Yes, the people will be satisfied."

"The Thousands of Rehala and Sassuti; will they be reliable hereafter?" I asked.

"They will obey their curacas, and their character will be moulded by their chiefs. It is for the Inca to provide them with proper commanders."

"And what of Capal?" I inquired. Then her face darkened.

"He did well to fly," she answered. "As long as he lives Huron Capac has a task before him, and there is peril; but," and she shrugged her shoulders contemptuously; "it is only women and laborers who know no peril; my lord will have him sought out and destroyed."

"Tell me then," I said, "will it not be well that I appear to-night in the banquet hall, and do honor to the curacas who have been so prompt and faithful?"

"My lord is wise," was the reply. "And it is well to make new friends while remembering the old."

Then she gave me a list of the names of those she thought it would be well to honor with the golden cup on this the first night of my reign. In such pleasant and sensible talk passed more than an hour. Then she said:

"You have had no rest or sleep for many hours. You must rest now, and so must I."

"I will not rest, sweet Amaru," I replied, "until the greatest question of all is settled. When are you to become the Inca's bride?"

"If my lord wills it so he can claim me before the court to-morrow, at midday," she said, smiling.

"Your lover wills it," I retorted. "Say to him now the things it is needful for him to know, that he may make no mistakes."

"It is not much, my Morning Star. The Inca proclaims his will, the bride stands by his side, and the High Priest holds before them the double ring into which each thrusts the forefinger of the right hand. Then the High Priest proclaims the marriage, and it is done."

"It shall be done," I said. "Now tell me, am I to return to my apartments?"

"Nay, the apartments of the Inca are here;" and she led the way into the Dragon Chamber. She turned a golden rosette upon the blank wall, and a small door swung outward. It admitted us to a large and airy apartment, well lighted by several tall loopholes, and furnished with a lavish splendor exceeding any I had before seen. She led me to a splendid couch, and made me lie down upon it. Then she kissed me

on the eyelids, and was gone. In a few minutes I slept, and it was nearly sunset when I awoke. Soon the notes of a mellow horn summoned all to the evening ceremonial. I went out upon the roofs, forgetting that it was my duty to guard the sacred fire; but Amaru did not forget, and for the first time her white-clad Virgins stood without her presence to say good night to their god. Never before had the world looked so beautiful to me. In the distance a purplish haze softened the mountains to the texture of dreams. Beneath them the forests gloomed in dusky browns and bluish greens. Nearer still, on every hand, the snowy gleam of homes embowered in countless groves and orchards smiled on me benignantly. To my right stood the creamy ranks of the Virgins, with their stern Amazonian guards. Around me on my high ramparts thronged my gayly dressed court, gleaming in gold and silver and many colored raiment. Below stood the motionless ranks of the soldiers, and over all the rosy flush of sunset lingered as though in blessing.

As the red rim disappeared, and the salutations and the song were heard, I cast a quick glance over the faces around me. All expressed a calm content. As I moved among them the same courteous mingling of friendliness, dignity,

and reverence marked their responses to my brief greetings, that had characterized their bearing toward Hualpa Capac. Judging by their appearance I concluded that they considered everything properly arranged and had dismissed the subject. That night, at the banquet, I acted the part of Inca without any mistakes. I made the proper progress through the anteroom, speaking to many as I passed, and kissed the golden cup of honor for those whose names had been suggested by Amaru. When the feast was ended, and I was alone, I sent for Quantal to be brought to the reception hall wherein Hualpa Capac had first given me private audience. He soon entered, bearing upon his shoulder the significant little burden. He knelt upon the floor and touched it with his forehead.

"Rise, curaca," I said, "and sit on yonder divan. I would hold counsel with you." Then, turning to the four Amazons who stood behind my couch I said: "Stand without the door until I recall you, and allow none to enter saving only Misti, or the Priestess Amaru."

When they had gone, and we were alone, I turned to the curaca, saying: "O curaca, once I promised to remember you when the sun shone on me with favor. Do you think that time has come?"

"It has come, and quickly, and beyond the dreams of possibility," he answered.

He touched the floor with his hand and carried it to his forehead. Then he continued: "Hualpa Capac was wiser than most men. It was revealed to him by his father, the Sun, that you were the Star that was to come from the East, to do great deeds for his people. Hence he called you his friend, and spoke the wise words to us before he went to the corn-planting. Now his children see the truth. We know that the Morning Star was sent to Amam-Mayu Land to save it from the unworthy, and to be a help and a blessing."

"Truly, Quantal, it is my wish to be even that to them; and I bring with me knowledge that will make them greater and stronger than the desire of their hearts, if such be the will of the God who sent me, and who has guided me through this swift and tangled maze."

"So do we all believe," he answered gravely.

"Whom do you mean by 'all'?" I asked.

"I mean the chiefs, the soldiers, and the people. I know nothing of the priests; but the High Priest crowned you. I know nothing of the Amazons; but I saw their curaca close her rank swiftly, and sternly before you, when Sasuti started for the dais, and I thought I would

mand the double ring." Quantal's jaw fell in amazement. Of course he did not know that I had ever exchanged a word with the Priestess excepting when she had related her vision on the preceding day; but he doubtless remembered his cautious expressions concerning her when we were first acquainted.

At last he said, "You are a brave man, O Inca."

"Why brave, curaca?"

"My lord, my life is at your service. What matters it where it is forfeited. The words I speak will cost me my life, but I will speak them. You are brave, O Inca, because you marry a woman who has powers over the spirits and demons. No foe of Amaru ever lives long, though she never speaks, and never strikes. She knows the words I speak to you this moment; and they will not be forgiven. But I love you, O Morning Star, and have spoken."

"Are these your only objections to her, Quantal?"

"Yes. She is great and strong and handsome. I admire her and fear. Were she like other women she would be the jewel of womanhood; but with her face of ice and her heart of fire and her hand of bronze, I fear her."

"Ah, Quantal, she is the jewel of womanhood to me; and she shall be queen of Amam-Mayu

Land. More than that, she shall be your friend. Did you not see to-day that she was first to salute me as Inca, as you were the second?"

"Yes. And I marveled at it. But if it is to be so, my lord, forget not your promise to remain my friend, and I will be faithful to you, and to her, and to your children.

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CHAPTER XX.

THE PUCUNA.

THREE happy years I reigned in Amam-Mayu Land. My royal bride was sweet and gentle, showing always the sincere submissiveness characteristic of the wives of her race. She believed in me utterly, and I strove to be worthy of her faith. No man ever tried harder to be a blessing to his people than did I. In all my plans she was my wisest counsellor. Only once did we fail to agree. It was when Capal was brought to the palace a haggard prisoner, and I was notified of his capture. When I told Amaru the soft light of her eyes blazed into a fierce, triumphant light.

"Now all is indeed well," she exclaimed. "Your line is established forever."

"What would you have me to do, Wise One?" I asked. The light in her eyes retreated into their depths and smouldered dangerously. Her voice again became the cold, sweet, terrible sound that thrilled me when Hualpa Capac pro-

nounced judgment. It was calm, impassive, immutable. Somehow it reminded me of the sphinx gazing across the waste of sands and centuries. "He must go a long journey to-night, whence he can never return to trouble us."

"Do you mean that he must die?" I asked.

"The Inca has said it."

"Sweet wife," I pleaded, "remember that he was not one of the conspirators. Surely we can so guard against this one weak man that he can do us no harm. I loathe to stain my reign with innocent blood."

"My Huron, it is the blood of a reptile who will crawl at your feet until he can sting you to death."

"I fear him not. When he coils to strike, then will I destroy him," I said.

She gazed steadily into my eyes a moment, then sank to her knees and seized my hand.

"The first petition of Amaru, sister of Hualpa, to my lord and husband the Inca. Give this man into my hand. It is for you, my Morning Star, and not for myself that I pray for this boon."

The tears were trembling in her eyes as she spoke.

"Great heavens," I exclaimed in English, "I can't let her murder him in cold blood. I

would rather do it myself." Then, seeing that the strange tongue had wounded her, I took her in my arms and kissed and soothed her as I would a child.

"Hear my thoughts, sweet one, and then you will understand me. The lessons of our youth are never forgotten. I have been taught that the most wicked thing a man can do is to take the life of another except in open combat. Were I to kill Capal, or allow it to be done while he is my prisoner, his face would haunt my dreams for years. It would banish all my joy, even in your dear presence. Should you be the one to accomplish it the thought would rise between us even in the moments of our greatest happiness. This is why I cannot grant your request. But I will set a watch over him so that he shall not draw a breath amiss without my knowing it."

While I was speaking she kept her face hidden on my arm, and for a little while she was silent. Then she raised her head and kissed me, saying:

"My lord is wiser than I; let it be as he wills it."

But I knew that she was not convinced. When she left me I called Quantal and gave him his instructions. "Make it plain to Capal that he is safe only so long as he is in this palace," I said. "Outside of these gates he will need

the protection that he will find only within them." Quantal looked puzzled.

"May I ask my lord whence might come his peril?"

"Yes, Quantal. The serpent strikes where the eagle cannot sweep." He looked at me with a startled comprehension.

"The eagle is brave," said he, "and there is none so wise as he, save the serpent."

"Perhaps in this matter the serpent is the wiser of the two," I said. I could see that that was his opinion.

I began my efforts at civilization in a systematic manner. I called the priests to my presence and told them they were the natural guardians of the wisdom and knowledge of Amam-Mayu Land; that there was in my possession a store of precious learning that would serve to make them and their people great; that it would require effort on their part to acquire it, but that it was entirely possible; and that the first thing to be done was for them to learn the way to make cloth talk. Then I showed them written words and read them, and explained that when they could thus write and read they could send their messages in sealed packages, and they would be secret and accurate. Then appeared the first sign of opposition I perceived in all the

land. It was courteous, submissive and subtle, but it was opposition. The High Priest bowed low and humbly, and said he and his brethren would try to learn whatsoever their lord might choose to teach them; but as for him, he was old, and unknown paths were hard for tired feet to follow, and he feared his lord would find him dull and foolish. I judged by the faces of the others that they agreed with him, though they said nothing. I was determined, however, and that day a class of ten was formed, to be followed by other ten the next day, and they by others, so that all should receive instruction in their turns. Having a clear field, with no lumber of obsolete notions in my way, I decided to discard the regular alphabet, and use only the telegraphic code of dots and dashes. When after many days of dull labor they had learned to distinguish and to name all the letters and numerals, I began to teach them to spell short words in common use, and to count ten. Then for the first time I saw a dawn of interest in some of my students. After a few days they would write untried words for others to read, and when they succeeded they were delighted. From this time forward they were rapidly differentiated into two classes; one composed of those who wished to learn and the other of those who, feeling that

their old condition was good enough, looked with suspicion and dislike upon any innovation. Most of these were so stupid and careless that they seemed incapable of learning anything except by rote, and without understanding. Finally they came to me in a body and craved that I would appoint some of them to be the guardians of learning and the teachers of those selected to be taught, and let the others remain as they were. "Some of us are too old and stupid to learn," said the High Priest, "and though we are glad to do anything to please our lord the Inca, yet we venture to ask that it be as we have suggested." I felt annoyed, but following my fixed rule never to decide any important question without consideration I dismissed them with a promise to answer them on the morrow. When I consulted Amaru about it she was disturbed.

"All of those who fail will love you less," said this wise councilor, "and not all of those who succeed will love you more. There will be two kinds of priests, and that is not well; but I see no help for it. You have held the cup to their lips, but they will not drink."

So it was settled. Only about half the priesthood continued their studies. But it was different with my curacas. They saw the usefulness

of the device at once, and attacked their tasks with vigor. At the very moment when the priests gave it up they were all sending me written reports every morning, though of a very simple character. The spelling being purely phonetic offered no difficulty and required no study. They also taught their captains of Hundreds as fast as they learned themselves. Then I called my curacas together, but not my priests, with whom I was disgusted, and initiated them into the mystery of reading these same dots and dashes by sound. I did not tell them why I wished them to learn this art, but it interested them like some new game of skill, and soon, with short crooked pieces of metal lying on a table, they could click questions and answers with surprising facility. Then I had them take red and white flags, and taught them how to make the dots with one and the dashes with the other. They were enthusiastic over this device, for they saw how useful it would be in actual service thus to be able to talk across long distances, or over the heads of a hostile force. The next step was to show them how to use the code at night by means of long flashes and short flashes from powerful lanterns. They needed no drill in this. The idea was all that was necessary. Then I established chains of signal stations, on hills, or

wooden towers, from the palace to every post in the empire, and instant communication was thus provided. I thought Quantal would go crazy with delight when for the first time he stood by my side upon the roof, and read the messages I sent to the far away southern outpost, and the reply that came in a few minutes. From the very first Amaru had grasped the full significance of the art, and had learned all its details with amazing facility. She also insisted upon learning the alphabet in which I kept my diary, and though it was much harder than the Morse alphabet she mastered it readily. I now turned my attention to other matters. I have not time to tell you all to-night. Already the hours of dawn approach.

I found iron ore, and taught them to make the pig and the bar. They are natural workers in metal, and this one discovery added more to my popularity among the common people than anything else I did for them.

I had ten lines of copper wire erected, one running from each of the main posts to the palace, and the homemade sounders and keys worked beautifully. The contacts were of gold, instead of platinum, which we did not have.

Amaru was more amazed at this manner of communication than at anything else. Other

things she could understand, but this was entirely beyond her comprehension. "It is like the talk of gods," she said. "Your words are heard through the spaces, and your will is done while yet you speak."

When the lines were all completed I made a tour of the posts, and instructed the curacas and captains in the care of their batteries and instruments. At each station I called up the palace, and conversed with Amaru; and her pleasure was great. Everywhere I was received with the greatest reverence and enthusiasm. The nation seemed almost to worship me. Thus passed three golden years. Then my happiness was crowned indeed. My glorious Amaru gave me a son. At your birth the nation went mad with joy. All work was suspended. Feasts, dances, processions, and illuminations were everywhere. Joy reigned supreme throughout Amam-Mayu Land. When, after due season, you were brought before the people in the great Hall of Judgment, and while you lay in your nurse's arms, with all the frippery that love and royal pride could invent adorning your baby form the High Priest called you by your name, Amam-Amaru, The Great Serpent, there was a shout that shook the palace, and decorum was lost sight of in the congratulations that poured from every lip.

I saw no cloud upon my future. Peace, power and prosperity seemed to me assured. Yet even at that moment my royal wife, standing by my side to smile her thanks upon her people, noticed a circumstance that had escaped my attention. I have neglected to mention Capal. He had dropped into his old place as dawdler about the court, and hard drinker at supper, and even Amaru had ceased to regard him with suspicion. He seemed absolutely contented with the physical abundance with which he was surrounded. He had taken several wives, but had no children. He had caused his apartments to be most luxuriously fitted up, and reveled in ease and idleness. It came to my ears, once, before you were born, that he had said sneeringly that while I worked myself to death managing the empire he was having all the fun and doing nothing; and that nothing could persuade him to change places with me. I believe he was sincere, and that he would never have given me any trouble of his own accord. Now the thing that Amaru noticed was that there were several fan-bearers in the court who were not Quichuas. It seems that the Moceteres, as she called the Chunchos, had captured a canoe on one of their excursions, and instead of killing the strange Indians who occupied it had

made them prisoners, and delivered them to the garrison at the southern wall. As it was a law that could not be changed, that save the Chuncho runners no one who entered their territory should ever be allowed to leave it, these Indians were detained in captivity. It seemed that now some of the frequenters of the court had employed these strangers as fan-bearers, an important occupation in this warm climate. The fans thus used were of feathers brightly dyed, and mounted on long handles of cane or other reeds some seven feet long. Each personage about the court, excepting the soldiers and officers, was followed by his fan-bearer, and they made quite a feature in the scene. I had noticed these strange Indians, with their scanty clothing, their arms and legs dyed blue, and their faces striped with yellow paint, but thinking their employment was merely a whim of some one, had said nothing about it to Amaru, and indeed had forgotten the circumstance. With the watchful vision of her race and training she had noticed more than I. She saw that there were six of these savages in all; that one of them followed Capal, one the High Priest, two of them followed other priests, and one of them the Chief Haravec. The sixth followed a young warrior, a son of Sassuti, who would have succeeded to

his father's command had that officer died honorably, or been retired on account of age or infirmity. If there were in all the court six men from whom enmity might be expected, these were they. The High Priest and some of his followers had felt their importance to be dwarfed by those who possessed the new learning which they had been unable to acquire. The son of the Haravec had died on the place of judgment, and he had no other son to succeed him. He had another cause for dissatisfaction which I was soon to learn. The son of Sassuti felt his deprivation of rank as an injury, and as for Capal, it is needless to account for the possibility of his hostility. When Amaru laid these things before me I was a little startled. Then I said: "But what harm can six naked, unarmed savages do? No arms are borne in that hall save by our Amazons. Why should we fear them?"

"I know not," she answered; "but it can be by no accident that they, and no others are thus followed. When does the ninth Thousand which was Sassuti's, guard the palace?"

"It is ordered for to-morrow at noon."

"And Andoval is here now. My Inca, do not laugh at your Amaru, nor think her foolish. She has two to love, and care for now," and she went to your bed and kissed you, and

fondled you, and called you 'wa-wa' like any simple woman of her race.

"What would you have me to do, dear heart?"

"My Inca, let Andoval secrete his best Hundred in the rooms over the Hall of Waiting this night, and call Quantal hither with two hundred more, so that they may be at hand in the middle walls, between us and the regiment in the barracks. Let them have orders to be ready at a word to guard the palace against the coming or going of a single man; and let the Amazons guard all the entrances with full force, so long as the Ninth Regiment is on guard."

"All this is easily done, Amaru," I replied, "and it shall be done at once."

And so it was arranged. Ah, that fatal morrow. Yet it was fate; and without it you would never have come to this land of knowledge, and learned the wisdom that will make you powerful. Let me tell it as soon as possible, and be done with it.

The hour of noon had passed. I was about to leave the dais through the *portière* in the rear, when an exclamation from Amaru caused me to look again at the court. The six savage fan-bearers were not near each other, but all were within thirty feet of the dais. To my astonishment they had all raised the butt-end of their

fan-handles to their mouths, and were pointing the fans toward me. I, poor fool, so proud of my great knowledge, saw nothing in this but a ridiculous gesture; but Amaru knew better. Crying out "The pucuna, the pucuna," she threw herself upon my breast between me and the fans. I heard a little whizzing sound like a flying bee; I saw the Amazons rush forward and spear the savages in an instant; there was a great cry and confusion in the court, and then the sound of shouting and fighting at the entrance. The white clad Amazons at the door were pressed back into the room. Suddenly there was another shout, a rushing of feet, the sound of metal upon metal in a storm of blows, and the Amazons again rushed forward, their assailants repelled in disorder. The surprise had in turn been surprised, and the men of Quantal and Andoval, falling upon the flanks of the attacking party, had driven them back to their barracks before they could realize the smallness of their numbers. Then it was too late, for every entrance was guarded by spears and shields, over which a torrent of arrows would overwhelm any assailant. Meanwhile I turned to Amuru. "What is it, my love?" I asked, as she showed me a slender arrow, not much larger than a friction match, but nearly a foot long."

"It is the poisoned arrow of the pucuna," she said.

"My God. And are you wounded?" for there was a drop of blood upon it.

"It scratched my neck," she answered. I tore the dress from her neck and saw a small red scratch. Instantly, in spite of her resistance, I laid my lips to it and sucked with all my strength. Again and again I spat out the blood and renewed the suction, until at last no more blood would come. Then I took her to our apartments. She made light of it, saying that it was only a scratch, and that all the poison must have come away with so much blood. Then I had time to think of vengeance. Seizing my rifle I rushed to the middle building now held by Quantal against three times his force. The advantage was entirely with him. The Ninth Regiment was in the barracks whose open sides were exposed to the fire from our loopholes, while we were entirely protected. They seemed to be desperate and savage, for every time we showed ourselves at a loophole a shower of arrows was discharged at it. Meanwhile no one had been allowed to leave the Hall of Judgment. Leaving Quantal in charge of the defense I took twenty Amazons and entered the Hall. There I found everything in confusion and dismay. No

one dared to address me, and I suppose my face must have been distorted with rage. I soon found the men I sought, for there was no escape for them save through the spears of the angry Amazons who held the doors. Capal and the other five were taken and bound with thongs, and carried to a small chamber where they could be safely guarded. Then I said to the court: "Remain here as my guests while I exterminate these vermin. This hall and the Hall of Waiting are free to you." Then I went back to Quantal.

"They are wasting their arrows, O Inca," said he grimly. "Surely he who commands them is not wise." Taking the cap from the head of a soldier I put it on a spear and bade him hold it before a loophole as though some one were looking out. He did so, and instantly the arrows flew. Some of them pierced the cap. As it was not withdrawn the archers understood the ruse, and with a shout of rage ceased their shooting. Then I peered out under the cap, and selecting for a mark one who was active in the attack, dropped him where he stood. At the sound of the rifle, and the fall of the man they were startled and confused. Another shot, and a flight of arrows from our loopholes showed them what to expect.

There was a moment of consultation, during which our fire continued with fearful effect. Then the bronze gates were unbarred, and they rushed out in full retreat. I gnashed my teeth with rage, for I thought they were about to escape me. A score of Quantal's men rushed across the courtyard and closed and barred the gates, and we moved our lines to the outer walls. The regiment halted just out of arrow-shot, and in a confused huddle was evidently considering what was to be done. I rushed to the tower to telegraph for Laval. Amaru was there, calm and strong, but the old tiger light had come back to her tawny eyes. Divining my purpose she said:

"Laval is on the road. He will be here in an hour. Andoval is turned back. I caught him with the flags at the first signal station. He will not show himself until Laval has come."

And so it was done. The Thousands came up behind them and drove them back to the wall. The rifle cracked, the arrows whizzed. They fought in silence, and the last man fell in his place in ranks. Then I thought my vengeance was satisfied, and went to seek Amaru.

CHAPTER XXI.

SUNSET.

I FOUND her awaiting me in the Dragon Chamber. "Are they all dead, every one of them?" she asked as I entered.

"All are dead save those whom I have reserved for a death more terrible than the spear." She gave me a look of approval.

"I have reserved the leaders for punishment," I continued, "and they shall receive it without fail. Now, my dear one, tell me something more of this pucuna with which you are wounded. I am not acquainted with it. What is it?"

"It is a long tube of wood, into which certain Indians put poisoned arrows and can shoot them with great force and accuracy," she answered.

"And the poison; what is its nature?"

"That I cannot tell you. It is unknown to the Quichuas."

"Is it so very dangerous?" I asked.

"It is said that no one ever recovers from its wound, however slight," she said: "But then no

one ever before had such ready and thorough removal of that poison. I do not feel it at all."

I noticed that a strange, humble-looking Quichua woman whom I had not seen before, was in the room, and wondered at her presence, until the child cried. Then she took it up, and gave it nourishment. I looked at Amaru in astonishment. She only smiled, and touched her wounded neck. Then I knew she was not so sure that the poison was not in her blood.

Then there followed a succession of days that bleached my hair and furrowed my face and hardened my heart, and shortened my life by years. In a few days it was evident that Amaru was growing weaker. It seemed to be a sort of creeping palsy that affected her. First she found it difficult to go up and down the stone steps. Then she could not walk.

Then her arms became useless. Day after day the work of that devilish poison was accomplished. She suffered no pain. There was only a slow loss of ability to use the muscles, and a gradual disappearance of the sense of touch. She did not talk much during those terrible days; but her dear eyes, how eloquent they were! Sometimes, as I sat by her, she would close them, and feign to sleep. Then if I rose to ease my anguish by softly pacing the floor I

would catch them following my movements with a pathetic yearning that it broke my heart to see. She never once seemed to remember that all this woe had come because I would not hearken to her advice to destroy Capal. She never allowed you to be absent from her side. Though she dared not nourish you, and could not fondle you, those eloquent eyes betrayed the passion of mother love that burned in her soul. Sometimes she would murmur long sentences of fond prattle to your inattentive ears; but for the most part she was silent. She knew, and I knew the inevitable end. She was dying. We did not speak of it until near the last. Then she sent away the nurse. It was almost night, and the red rays of the western sun streamed through the window. We looked at each other, and I suppose the dumb agony in my eyes touched her.

"You suffer more than I, dear," she said in a slow, hesitating way, unlike her own firm, confident speech; "but it is so much better that it should be I who am summoned than thou. Think what if the Inca had been slain. But you are very wise, my Huron. Comfort now the heart of Amaru. In our child is the only true blood of the children of the Sun. What will you do to insure his safety, and your own?"

Then I told her the thoughts and plans that had surged through my brain during those terrible days and nights. "Sweet wife," I said, "I have remained in Amam-Mayu land only because you were here, and I love you. Your people are dear to me only for your sake. Hear now what it seems best for me to do. I will carry our boy far hence, to the land of the sunrise, where he will find not a foe. I will teach him the wisdom that is the might of kings and the strength of nations. I will take with me an abundance of the white and red and green precious stones. They occupy but little space, and will supply all his wants. I will take Misti, and the nurse, to rear and care for him, and she shall teach him your own tongue, and sing to him the songs of the Incas. When he is a man, and has learned all knowledge that can command the strength of nations and the hearts of men I will tell him of his kingdom here, and of the road thereto, and of Quantal who shall keep it for him, and he may return to claim it if he will. And when he returns it shall be with power and wisdom that shall make him to seem like a god in the eyes of his people. Does this please you, my Coya, my Queen? For I swear that whatever you desire shall be performed, no matter what it may be; and if you like not this plan

I will make another, and yet another, until one shall be found to satisfy you." She closed her eyes, and for minutes was thinking deeply. At last she said:

"It grieves me for the llautu to be worn by one of the common blood, even for only a season; but it will be far safer for our son to be beyond the reach of foes until he is a man. Then he will be wise and strong and know no fear; for he is your child, and mine. Bring him to me a moment. I would show you something."

I did as she requested.

"Bare his breast," she said. When I had done so I saw there the blue serpent and red star that had been tattooed over your heart.

"Let this be his banner," she said; "and let it wave over the palace until he returns to bear it where it should go." After resting a little while, for she was very weak, she said: "It is not long before I go, my Huron. Let me say now, while I can yet speak, that your love has been the greatest joy that has ever come into the life of Amaru. I know I shall always be buried in your heart. I would not exchange it for a tomb in the Hall of Ice, by the side of my ancestors."

"Dear one," I exclaimed, a sudden plan flash-

too late that mercy must not be shown to poisonous reptiles. But they shall never sting again. The law of Amam-Mayu Land shall be fulfilled. Capal and his fellow-murderers shall die, and all their house. There shall not be left one of kindred blood to breed more traitors here. If the land runs blood instead of water, yet shall it be purged of them."

A flash of the old fire blazed for a moment in her eyes. "Now indeed are you my great Inca," she exclaimed. "Now shall I rest content, for I know that our son shall surely reign over Amam-Mayu Land." She slept, then, a little while, but the sound of the evening horn aroused her. She gazed out through the loophole at the ruddy western sky, and I could see that she was thinking of her god. Suddenly the noise of the salutation crashed upon the air. Then the soft notes of the song arose. With a soft quavering voice she tried to sing its few familiar notes. Then she looked at me in a bewildered way, and said softly: "Good-night." Her eyes closed, and it was minutes before I could realize that she was dead.

CHAPTER XXII.

VENGEANCE.

THEN my heart was like a volcano's, and rage and vengeance drove out grief. I ordered each curaca to send me five hundred of his men. I secured lists of all the kindred of Capal, Sassuti, and the recreant priests. Then I sent forth my soldiers with orders that not one of them should be left alive. The slaughter was terrible, but it was according to the law of the land, and no man deemed it beyond the demands of justice. I asked no questions, and when it was done the troops came back to the palace to await further orders. I caused the High Priest and his fellow-priests to be brought before me, and commanded them to embalm the body of Amaru according to forms provided for the bodies of the Incas. He protested that it was unlawful to embalm the body of a woman. I replied that it was also unlawful to strip a priest of his robes and cast him to the strangler; but that that was what I would do unless my command was instantly

obeyed. Then I sent them to the death chamber without waiting for a reply. They worked all that day and the following night, and at last sent me word that the work was done as I had commanded. Then I directed that she should be left alone, and I went to look upon her face again.

It was well for those priests that they had done their work perfectly. They held, and still hold the secret of embalming to a degree of perfection surpassing that possessed by the Egyptians. My lost love sat in a chair of state. She was robed in her priestly garments, with the Sun and Serpent embroidered upon them in mystical combination. Her hands were crossed in her lap, her head rested easily upon the back of the throne, and her eyes were closed as though she slept peacefully for a moment, and would waken presently. By some cunning of their art the tint of health was on lip and cheek, and there was nothing ghastly or repulsive in the entire result. I gazed long and sadly in that dear face that would never smile on me again, and there in the solitude of that secret chamber I yielded for the first time to the grief that consumed me.

Then I returned to my stern duties. I summoned Quantal to my presence and unfolded my

plans. At first he begged me not to leave him, but at last he consented to guard the empire until your return, should he live so long. Then I directed him to prepare a trusty force of two hundred men, with stores of provisions, and litter-bearers to carry my Coya to her tomb in the Hall of Ice.

"My Inca," he said, looking much disturbed, "there is only one who knows the song of the quipus, and without it how shall we know the road to the Hall of Ice, or the marks that show the door?"

Then I remembered that Amaru had written down the songs of the quipus, and they were in the golden casket that held the Royal Quipu. So I said to him that I would show the way, and he was satisfied. I ordered him also to provide a trusty band of the Moceteres Indians to act as scouts and hunters. "Who will command this expedition?" he inquired.

"Andoval," I replied. "I cannot take you away from the palace at such a time."

He acquiesced, but I saw that he longed to accompany me. Then I went to the study of the songs. At first I could not fathom their meaning. Finally I comprehended their metaphors, and understood. Everything was plain. The road lay up the left bank of a certain stream

until a mountain gorge led farther toward the south. Then the gorge was followed until it ended on the top of a mountain. From thence three peaks could be seen in the west, and the road lay through the forest to the foot of these, where was another stream which was to be followed to its source. Above it would rise a peak. From its summit, to the northwest, would be seen two snow-clad cones sharply cut against the sky. At the foot of the snow, on the southern side of the southern mountain would be found a great square rock standing alone. No other rock was in sight. From the top of this rock a straight line to the summit of the ice cone would cross the door of the Hall of Ice. It should be known by two projections like great breasts of ice, and in the hollow between them men should hew away the ice and expose the rock. Then would be seen the door. And when it was removed the Hall of Ice was ready for the guests that tarried long.

On the third day all was ready. I met my court at the hour of noon. I stood upon the dais to bid farewell to the people. They thronged around me motionless and silent, with awe and fear in their faces; for they had learned that I could be terrible, and they deemed me more than mortal. I told them that

I was about to leave them for a long time; that I would take the young prince, the Python, to the land of the rising sun. There I would invest him with the power of the lightning, and the terrors of the tornado. He should grow in strength and greatness, and when he was a man he should return to rule over Amam-Mayu Land and make it greater than the Incas had ever dreamed. Then should come the great vengeance, and though it might not come in the form they looked for, it would come nevertheless. I told them that while I was absent the curaca, Quantal, would represent me in everything; that if he did not live until my return he should appoint another curaca to guard the nation. I caused to be unrolled a new banner, displaying a blood-red star, with a huge blue serpent surrounding it, upon a white ground. I commanded that this banner should float forever upon the northeastern pinnacle of the castle as a symbol of their absent Python. In conclusion I warned them to be faithful.

"I and my predecessors have ruled you by the power of the sun," I said. "This power I cannot yield to any mortal, but until I return the authority of the state will be maintained by the power of the sword. From this day until the Python comes the fires of the sun will not

execute judgment in this hall. They shall sleep until he comes." As I said these words the bright spot of sunlight on the place of judgment suddenly grew dim. The obscurity increased until the light shaft became black with darkness.

"It is done," I said. "Know now, that when the Python comes, if he finds a faithful people awaiting him, he shall bring blessings and happiness to every one of this people. But if he finds rebellion or unfaithfulness anywhere, the punishment that shall be inflicted will be too awful for description. And do not think that because he is so far away he will not know what is happening here. As now I can speak in the palace and my voice be heard to the uttermost bounds of the empire, so shall a voice warn him of everything that occurs in Amam-Mayu Land; so that when he returns he shall not have to learn whom to reward and whom to punish, but shall say to this one, 'my friend, and to another 'accursed,' and he shall not err."

Then I made all the curacas and the officers of the palace and the Amazonian commanders and the priests of the temple swear by their most solemn oaths to be faithful to me and to regard the words of Quantal as my own. That night as the moon rose the expedition passed out at the great bronze gates, their sonorous

clang rang out upon the still air as they closed behind me, and I have seen them no more. The order of our march was peculiar. First Andoval, with fifty soldiers marching eight abreast. Then the litter whereon sat Amaru. Then six men, with hands bound behind them, and coupled together with thongs, walked two and two, with two soldiers on either side. Then came my own litter, followed by another in which your nurse carried in her arms your sleeping form. Misti walked by its side. His work at the palace was done. The mirrors were turned over the light shaft and covered with a wall of wood, over which thin slabs of rock were so placed as to entirely conceal them. By his side stalked Huanaro, with my old knapasck strapped to his back. Behind us followed the remainder of the soldiers, guarding fifty porters who bore supplies. Upon my person, and upon Misti, and in the packages of clothing belonging to the child, were little bags of the white and red and green stones. I knew them to be diamonds and rubies and emeralds, some of them worth a kingdom. Upon one litter was piled the vessels and images and other art works in gold and jewels, together with many cloths of rich material and color. These were for the furnishing of Amaru in the Hall of Ice. No

other potentate who rested there should outshine her glory, even in the darkness.

As we passed, with much labor, down the great northern wall we saw awaiting us a stolid band of Chunchos, grim, naked and painted. They took their orders from Andoval, and sped away into the forest. Thenceforth we saw but little of them. Occasionally a runner would enter to make some report, or a carcass of venison would be sent back. Sometimes we passed smouldering campfires that showed where they had slept; but their service, though efficient, was almost imperceptible.

The way was long and tiresome. I will not recount our hardships, but we met many. At last, after two weeks of struggling, we found ourselves at the door of the Hall of Ice.

All day long the hatchets and chisels of bronze and iron attacked the barrier, and at last the door was opened. The great flat stones were pried away, and with only Andoval and two torch-bearers I entered. The entrance was about six feet square, and had evidently been enlarged from some natural opening into the cavern. After we had gone some thirty paces the wall suddenly rose and slanted upward toward the central blackness of darkness above. The cavern was conical in shape, and vast in



size. It was the crater of an extinct volcano, and the interior corresponded with the outlines of the snowy cone without. At first I wondered what could have closed the mouth of this giant crater, but a brief investigation solved the problem. Straight in front of me, some hundred feet distant, some shining object reflected the light of the torches. Approaching it I found it was ice. It was the plug of ice and snow that had climbed for thousands of years, from the floor of the extinct volcano, until the top was reached, and then, still piling up, had formed the needle-like summit of the mountain. Passing to the other side of this immense pillar of ice I came suddenly upon a scene so strange and solemn that the picture remains in my memory to this day as vividly as when first I gazed upon it. Against the wall facing the ice there was arrayed a long row of thrones, tricked out in all the barbaric splendor of skins and gaudy robes and a wild profusion of gold and silver ornaments. Flowers and trees of precious metal overshadowed them. Birds of gold and silver, with eyes of jewels, floated over them. Richly colored robes of varied materials were hung upon the walls, and spread as carpets upon the floor. Upon each throne sat a man, gorgeously clad, with the llautu upon his forehead, his hands

clasped in his lap, his face gazing straight forward, but with his eyes closed as though he slept. Some were men still young, with long black hair hanging about their shoulders. Some were old and wrinkled, and their scanty locks were white as snow. There they sat, a court of kings. They were not without subjects. By the side, before, and around each Inca thronged scores of men and women. Some were upon their knees with their faces buried in his robes. Some lay supine, with frozen eyes staring into the black dome above. Some lay with their faces buried in the carpet, and their hands over their ears, as though to shut out the awful darkness, and deaden some fearful sounds that tortured them. Some lay with folded arms and limbs composed, as though sleeping in supreme content. There were hundreds of them, and not one bore a fetter or constraint of any kind. The warriors rested with their weapons beside them. The women wore their richest attire and were adorned with jewels and feathers. No slave was there in all that silent company. After a long survey of this wonderful tableau I turned to my companions. Andoval was kneeling at a little distance behind me, his helmet in his hand. The torch-bearers were upon their faces, though they still held their torches upright.

"Come," I said; and they silently rose and followed me.

The cold was intense. It must have been near zero. When we regained the outer air the light seemed blinding, from contrast with the darkness we had left. I did not delay. In a low voice I gave my final instructions to Andoval. Six torches were borne before the litter of Amaru, and six behind. Led by Andoval they entered the cavern. Then followed twenty Indians bearing the vessels of gold and silver, and the art works, the robes and draperies to honor my beloved in her resting place. Then followed Capal, the High Priest, and the other four whose cursed tools had slain Amaru. After them came twenty picked men. I followed last, and six more torches were around me.

The throne of Amaru, bearing its royal burden, was placed beside that of her father. The curtains were hung, the carpets were spread, the treasures were disposed around her, and the men stepped back and awaited my orders. As I looked at her for the last time a great dry sob in my breast felt as though it would burst my heart. Then the rage rose again, as I saw her murderers regarding her. I made a sign to Andoval. He spoke a word and instantly the six were thrown upon the floor. Their hands

and their feet were tied together behind them in such a way that they were helpless to move. Capal made no struggle. He seemed stupefied with fear. His little snaky eyes were bloodshot and staring; his jaw hung down and his tongue protruded, but he made no sound. The High Priest muttered curses, but made no resistance. The others struggled fiercely, but without avail. Only one spoke to me. It was the Chief Hara-vec. He said:

"She stole from me the Royal Quipu. At her request Hualpa Capac gave it to her, and I am avenged. Now it is lost to you, and to all. Do your worst; I am avenged."

"Without a word I took from my bosom the golden casket and showed it to him. Then he was silent. When they were laid in a row at her feet I said to them:

"Farewell. When the day of waking comes you shall find yourselves the only slaves in all this royal company."

Then I kissed the cold lips of my beloved, and led the way from the cavern. Outside the kettles were melting ice. The stones were soon replaced. The cracks were filled with pounded ice. Then for hours the water was poured over the stones, until all were hidden beneath a coating of ice. Then all stood waiting my pleasure.

I looked around me. Above us the white cone towered a thousand feet into the intensely blue sky. On either hand were grouped my Indians silent and motionless. The stillness was so complete that it was oppressive. Away out to the eastward a solitary condor sailed, far beneath us yet far above the land he surveyed. Below him the foothills rolled away in blue-green billows and the glint of a lake could be seen. Suddenly through the dead stillness there came a soft indistinct sound like the murmur of an æolian string when gently stirred. I looked at Andoval inquiringly. He pointed toward the sealed opening. Then I knew that the wails of the lost wretches had pierced the stony breast of the mountain; but they did not soften mine. My vengeance was accomplished.

CHAPTER XXIII

CONCLUSION.

My next step was to provide for regular communication with the City Without a Name, for I did not intend to lose sight of it for twenty years. Yet I determined that I would so arrange matters that the outside world should be none the wiser for my adventure. I gave Andoval careful directions to mark certain conspicuous points I had noticed as we came along and to take a careful record of the same for future use. He was also to select ten of his most trustworthy men and instruct them to carefully observe these points and the route between them. His orders and also those of Quantal were that on the anniversary of the entombment of Amaru each year a messenger from the City Without a Name should stand from sunrise to sunset at the door of the Hall of Ice waiting for a message from me. That messenger was to bring me full written reports of the condition of the empire and of everything that was worthy of note. Then I

sent them back and just before sunset they disappeared in the eastern woods. My party now consisted of Misti, Huanaro, and your nurse. We had a plentiful supply of food and I was well armed. The country between me and the coast was sparsely inhabited by Quichas, Mestizos or half-broeds, with a few white people, and it was my wish to gain such a considerable entrance into the inhabited country before we were discovered that no suspicion of anything unusual would attach to us. I took from my knapsack my old buckskin suit that had done such good service when I entered Amam-Mayu Land and put it on in place of the conspicuous garb I had been wearing.

We camped that night not far below the snow line, and daylight found us on our way. We traveled slowly but steadily all that day and the next, and the second night found us at the hut of a Quichua Indian who made his living in this remote region by guiding the cascarilleros, or gatherers of cinchona, across the mountains to the foothills where they found their trees.

There was nothing extraordinary to him in the sight of a white man traveling with an Indian woman and some servants. I briefly told him in his own language that I had been prospecting for gold and silver in the mountains, had

had no luck, and was going back to the coast. He shared his hut with us, and I won his heart next morning by giving him a real gold coin. As we were about to start he asked me whether I was going to take the trail or follow the aqueduct. I knew nothing of either, but said only that I did not know anything about the aqueduct. Then he told me that about a league to the north there was a mountain lake from which the Incas had built a great aqueduct to a certain city. It was ruined now and contained no water, but it was used by the Indians as a sort of trail much shorter though more difficult than the regular trail. No white man had ever been that way, he said, but he thought I could do so if I wished. This news set me to thinking. Here was a landmark and a guide to within two days' march of the Hall of Ice where my messengers were to meet me. Here was a man who might be made an unconscious means of communication with the messengers. I could not figure it all out at once, so I told the Indian I very much wanted to see that aqueduct, and would give him another gold coin if he would go with me to the farther end of it. This he at once consented to do, for the reward was greater than he could earn in a month at his home.

The aqueduct proved to be one of those

stupendous works that are the wonder and envy of the engineering world. Few people are aware that the Incas built aqueducts beside which those of Rome were puny and slight. We followed this great stone trough more than eighty miles, and then left it long before it reached its destination. Sometimes it carried us over arches a hundred feet in height that spanned in grand succession a valley over a mile wide. Sometimes it burrowed through the heart of a mountain where we feared to follow it, and went over the summit to find it again on the other side.

From one of these mountain tops I descried a little village with its plaza and church, and I knew that my journey was accomplished. I dismissed the guide with his promised reward. But first I told him I had left some dear friends at a settlement far in the interior, on a river where there were no white men, and I would want to send them a message occasionally. I would send one of the two men who were with me and no other; and they should come to his hut to rest and to start on their journey. To this he readily agreed and we parted. When he was gone I told Huanaro and Misti, though not in the same manner, that they must remember the way from that spot to the Hall of Ice, and each declared that he would know it perfectly. The aqueduct

and the two white peaks visible from the eastern end would leave no chance for error.

Then we proceeded on our way to the village. From that place our journey was entirely uneventful. I had sufficient funds in my belt to pay all expenses, and in two months from that day I stood on the shores of California. I came to Chicago, and for awhile lived obscurely, my sole care in life being to see that your wants were supplied and your health assured. To those who were curious about my strange servants I simply said that they were Peruvian Indians whom I had brought from an expedition to the interior in search of precious stones. As I began to offer some of my jewels upon the market I found myself becoming an object of great interest to many people who heard of the wonderful beauty and value of the stones. This soon became not only troublesome but dangerous, and I finally placed the bulk of my treasure in one of the safety vaults of the city. A large number of almost priceless stones rest there still, but for many years I have been turning their values into money as rapidly as possible, and placing it to my credit in the Bank of England, the Bank of France, and in United States bonds. My expenses have been moderate, and the small rate of interest I have secured has increased my for-

tune wonderfully. Were all the jewels sold at their market value and my wealth converted into ready money, I would be by far the wealthiest man in this country. In this house I have lived for the past ten years, and this has been your home. Every year I have sent Huanaro to the Hall of Ice, and he has always met the messenger and exchanged dispatches. The people of Amam-Mayu Land watch and long for your return as the Jews longed for their promised Messiah; when you return, if you do return, they will know you and welcome you; for your banner waves over the great castle, and its device is over your heart. You have had the advantage of the best schools in America, and have won distinction in both your civil and military studies.

The world is open wide before you. There is no compulsion in the matter of your return. Amam-Mayu Land can offer you no greater wealth than you will possess here, and wealth is power here as it is elsewhere. I have told the story of your birth and inheritance, not to influence your final decision but in order that you may know all, and knowing it, make your choice between the life you have seen here and the life I have described. It remains with you now to decide whether the Royal Quipu shall receive another scarlet cord, and tell the story of a new

line of Incas; or shall remain here in this land of bustle and strife to be an heirloom and a curiosity. Whatever your decision, I shall approve. Whether you go or stay, I shall be with you. Take as much time for consideration as you see fit. It is yet two months before a messenger will wait at the door of the Hall of Ice.

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There was silence in the room for several minutes. The elder of the two stood looking out of a window into the avenue. Presently the young man rose. "Give me the Quipu," he said.

He took it in his hand and crossed the room to where the portrait stood. Then he opened its cabinet and gazed long and earnestly at the noble face and regal form. At last he spoke again. "Mother," he said, speaking softly, "surely if souls can come at will yours is here to-night. Listen to your son who has even now learned to love and reverence your memory. Though I am young, and love the pleasures of my present life and station, they would now be tasteless and joyless did I prove so unworthy of you and your royal nature as to loiter here in the lap of luxury when your people need me. Upon this sacred symbol of the history of my ancestors I promise that I will do your will."

He knelt and kissed the mystic web, and replacing it in its casket returned to his father. He turned to meet his son. He held out his hand and grasped that of the young soldier. "The day is dawning," he said.

THE END.









